

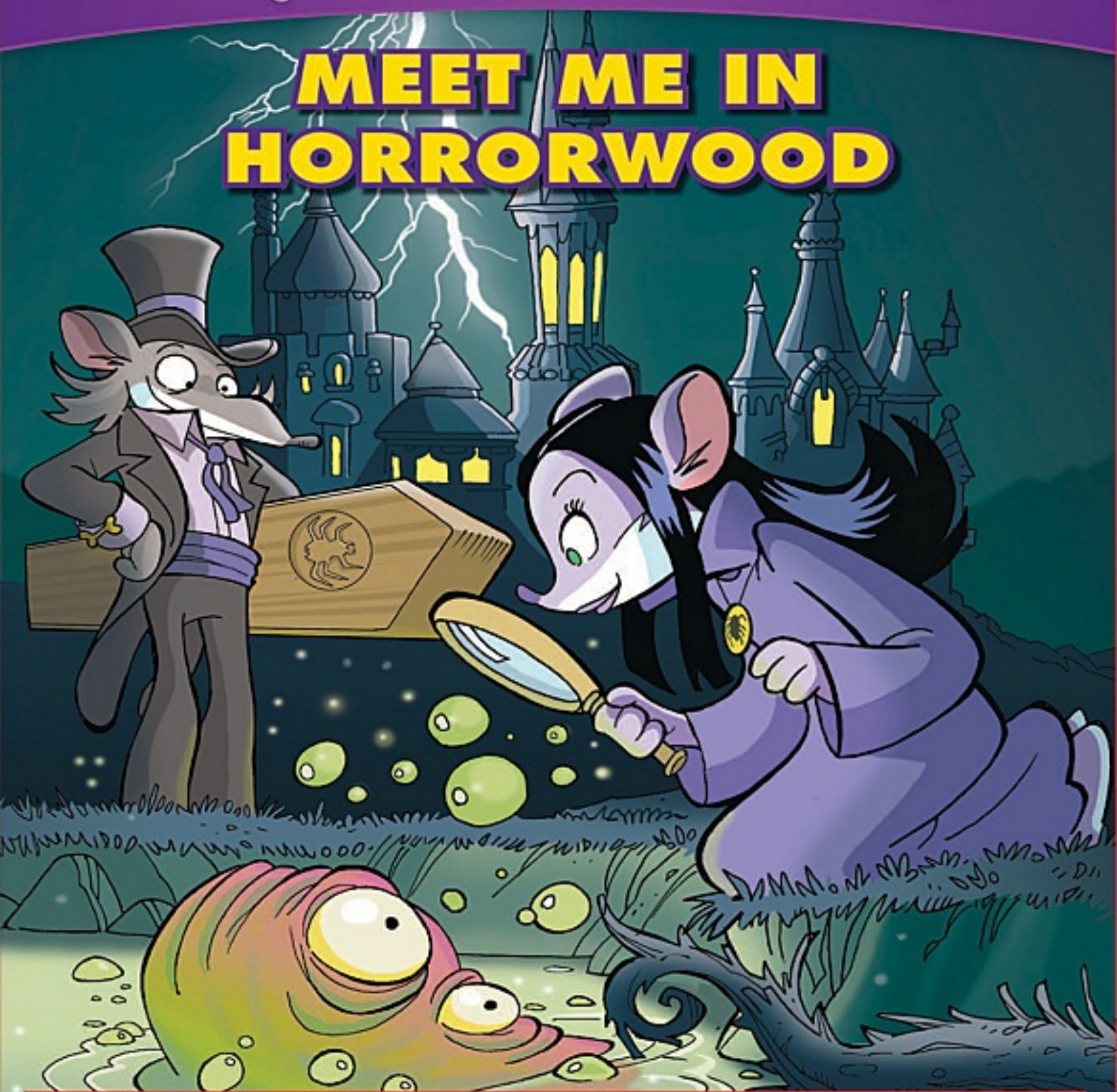


Geronimo Stilton



CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

MEET ME IN
HORRORWOOD



SCHOLASTIC

I, *Geronimo Stilton*, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as **spooky** as my friend **CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR**! She is an enchanting and **MYSTERIOUS** mouse with a pet bat named **Bitewing**. Creepella lives in a **CEMETERY**, sleeps in a marble **sarcophagus**, and drives a **hearse**. By night she is a special effects and set designer for **SCARY FILMS**, and by day she's studying to become a **journalist**! Her father, Boris von Cacklefur, runs the funeral home **Fabumouse Funerals**, and the von Cacklefur family owns the **CREEPY** Cacklefur Castle, which sits on top of a skull-shaped mountain in **MYSTERIOUS VALLEY**.



YIKES! I'm a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think Creepella and her family are **AWFULLY** fascinating. I can't wait for you to read this **fa-mouse-ly funny** and **SPECTACULARLY SPOOKY** tale!

Geronimo Stilton





An extremely mad scientist and an expert in Egyptian mummies.

Creepella von Cacklefur



Grandpa Frankenstein



A journalist who lives in Mysterious Valley and solves spooky cases with her inseparable pet bat, Bitewing.



Bitewing

Billy Squeakspeare



A famous writer and friend of Creepella.



Creepella's favorite niece.

Shiverreen

Grandma Crypt



She loves spiders, and her pet is a gigantic tarantula named Dolores.

Dolores



Snip and Snap



Troublemaking twins and expert spies.

Kafka



The von Cacklefur family's pet cockroach.

Booey the
Poltergeist



The mischievous
ghost who haunts
Cacklefur Castle.

Boneham



The butler to the von
Cacklefur family, and a
snob right down to the
tips of his whiskers.

Baby



He was adopted and
raised with love by
the von Cacklefurs.

Chef Stewrat



The cook at Cacklefur
Castle. He dreams
of creating the
ultimate stew.

Boris von
Cacklefur



Creepella's father, and
the funeral director at
Fabumouse Funerals.

Madame
LaTomb



The family
housekeeper. A
ferocious were-canary
nests in her hair.

Chompers



The von
Cacklefur family's
meat-eating
guard plant.

Geronimo Stilton

CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD



Scholastic Inc.

New York	Toronto	London	Auckland
Sydney	Mexico City	New Delhi	Hong Kong

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, please contact Atlantyca S.p.A., Via Leopardi 8, 20123 Milan, Italy; e-mail foreignrights@atlantyca.it, www.atlantyca.com.

eISBN 978-0-545-71482-2

Copyright © 2010 by Edizioni Piemme S.p.A., Corso Como 15, 20154 Milan, Italy.

International Rights © Atlantyca S.p.A.

English translation © 2011 by Atlantyca S.p.A.

GERONIMO STILTON names, characters, and related indicia are copyright, trademark, and exclusive license of Atlantyca S.p.A. All rights reserved. The moral right of the author has been asserted.

Based on an original idea by Elisabetta Dami.

www.geronimostilton.com

Published by Scholastic Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Stilton is the name of a famous English cheese. It is a registered trademark of the Stilton Cheese Makers' Association. For more information, go to www.stiltoncheese.com.

Text by Geronimo Stilton

Original title *Mistero a Castelteschio*

Cover by Giuseppe Ferrario

Illustrations by Ivan Bigarella (pencils and inks) and Giorgio Campioni (color)

Map of Cacklefur Castle: Color by Christian Aliprandi

Graphics by Yuko Egusa

Special thanks to Tracey West

Translated by Lidia Morson Tramontozzi

Interior design by Elizabeth Frances Herzog

First printing, August 2011



A SHADOW IN THE NIGHT . . .

It was almost midnight. I was working late in my office at *The Rodent's Gazette*, the most famous newspaper in New Mouse City. Suddenly, I thought I saw the **SHADOW** of a bat outside my window.

WEIRD!

Could it really be a bat? I looked out of the window. A **FULL** moon shone brightly in the black sky. But I didn't see any bats.







Oh, I'm sorry! I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Stilton, *Geronimo Stilton*. I'm the editor of *The Rodent's Gazette*. I turned back to my computer, but I felt strange, as if somebody was staring at me. **WEIRD!**

I headed to the office kitchen. A nice **CUP** of hot cheddar tea was just what I needed to calm down.



A shiver ran down my back, **curling** my whiskers. I couldn't shake that creepy feeling. So I turned off the light and headed home.

As I walked, I had the **ODD** feeling that someone was following me. I walked faster and faster. Finally, I reached the front door of my house. I **quickly** went inside and locked the door behind me. Then I breathed a sigh of relief.

I was just putting on my apron when a **chilly** breeze hit my whiskers. The window was wide open. **WEIRD!** I was sure I had closed it that morning. As I moved to shut it, I thought I heard the rustling of wings outside.

Zoom! Something zipped right past me! I felt it brush against my **whiskers**. Then something heavy landed right on my tail! I let out a bloodcurdling scream:

SQUEAK!





A large package wrapped in purple paper bounced off of my tail and landed on the floor. Then a tiny voice yelled in my ear:



*“Message for you!
Message for you!
Message for you!”*

I recognized that voice. It was **Bitewing**, Creepella von Cacklefur’s pet bat!

I rubbed my bruised tail.

“Open the box! It’s for you!” the purple bat screeched.

I tore off the purple paper and opened the box. The first thing I saw was a card shaped like a **TOMBSTONE**! There were two hearts on the front of the tombstone, with the initials *G* and *B* underneath. **WEIRD!**

Underneath the tombstone were a computer disc and a letter written on purple paper.



The label on the disc said *Meet Me in Horrorwood*. The letter read:

*To my little cheese nip, Geronimo,
I'm sending you a new adventure
(on the disc!). You must publish it
immediately! It's a scary love story!*

*Inside this purple box, you will also
find a tombstone-shaped wedding
invitation. If you want to find out
who's getting married at Cacklefur
Castle, read the story!*

I was so curious, I began to read it right away. . . .





CVC

★ **MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD** ★
★ STORY AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR ★

To my little cheese nip,
I'm sending you a new advent-
disc!). You must publish it immediately.
a scary love story!
Inside this purple box, you will also find a
tombstone-shaped wedding invitation. If you
want to find out who's getting married at
Castle, read the story!



THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG . . .

“Auntie?”

Creepella von Cacklefur slowly opened her eyes. Someone was **tugging** on her blanket.

“Auntie, wake up! We’ve got a **problem!**”

Creepella propped herself up on her pillows and **YAWNED**. Her niece, Shivereen, was standing by the bed next to her. She looked very worried.

Kafka, the von Cacklefur family’s pet cockroach, slept at the foot of Creepella’s bed. He slowly opened his beady eyes. Then he wiggled his **antennae** to greet Shivereen.



Yawn . . .

Auntie?

Creepella saw the first rays of the sun rising in the **GLOOMY** sky. Cacklefur Castle was as quiet as a tomb.

She felt very sleepy. Last night, a magnificent full moon shone in the sky. It had inspired her to write an article about **werewolves** for *The Shivery News*. Being published in the most famous newspaper in Mysterious Valley was a great achievement. Creepella had worked late into the night, and now she didn't feel like waking up. But Shivereen looked like she had something **important** to say.

"What's wrong?" Creepella asked, yawning again.

"There's something wrong with Gorgo!" Shivereen cried. "He's not stinking like he always does. His **GREEN SLIME** coloring has faded. And he won't eat!"



Mr. M.'s MONSTER CATALOG

GORGO

Cacklefur Castle's moat monster

BIRTHPLACE: A stinky swamp that's impossible to find

AGE: Between 15 and 150 monster years

SIZE: Always changing

FAVORITE FOOD: Eats everything, but prefers rotten food with vintage rust

FAVORITE COLOR: Slime green

FAVORITE PERFUME: Essence of Smelly Socks

FAVORITE BOOK: *Green Eggs and Hammers*

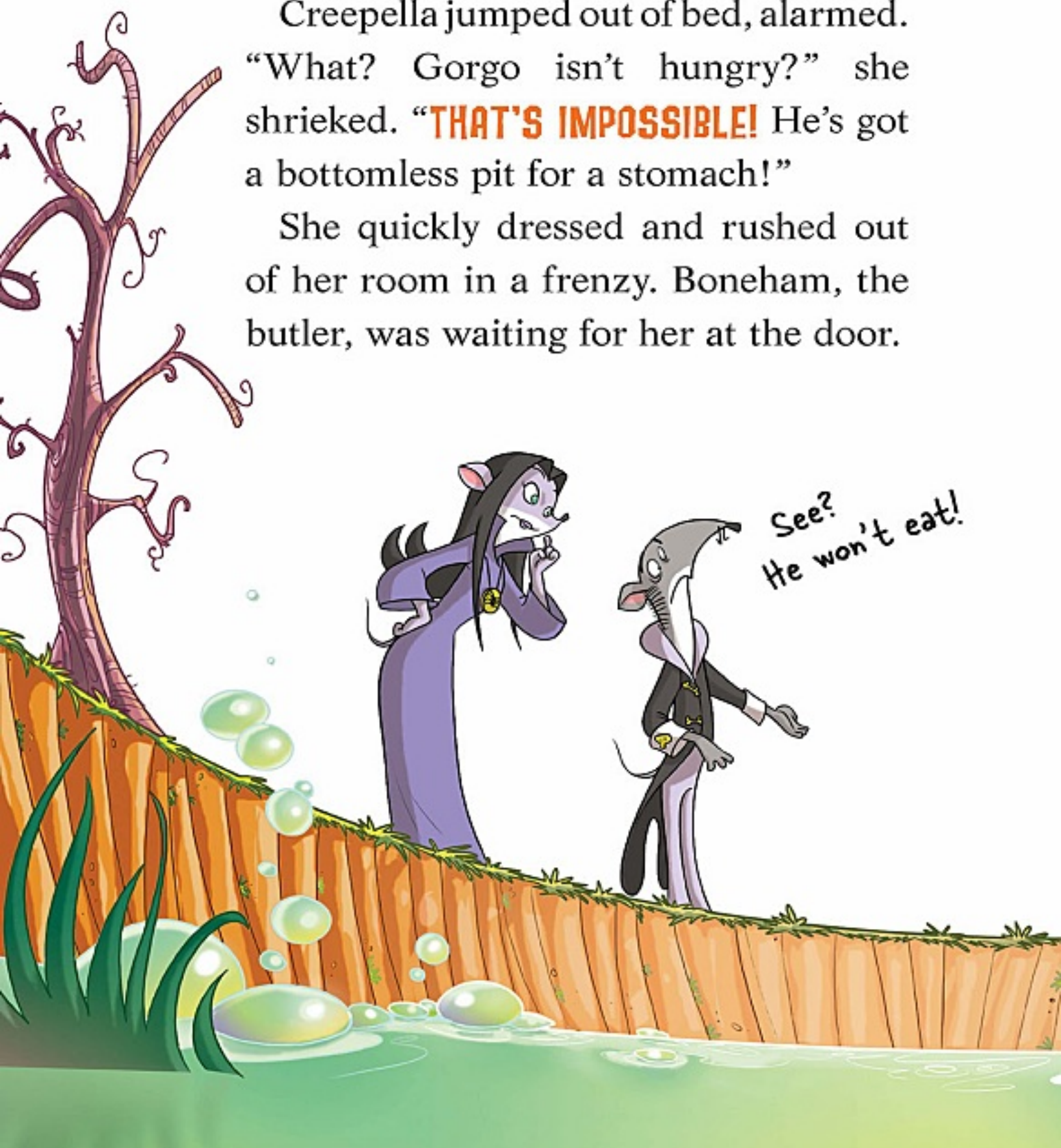
IDENTIFYING MARKS: Green boils all over his body

It appears there may be only one other creature of this type in the entire world — a female monster.



Creepella jumped out of bed, alarmed. "What? Gorgo isn't hungry?" she shrieked. "**THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!** He's got a bottomless pit for a stomach!"

She quickly dressed and rushed out of her room in a frenzy. Boneham, the butler, was waiting for her at the door.



See?
He won't eat!



“Miss Creepella, the situation is serious,” he said. “Please **FOLLOW ME!**”

They quickly reached the moat, where the monster lived. Boneham threw a rusty old bicycle into the **muddy** water. Bicycles were one of Gorgo's favorite foods.

“Bluuuuuuurp!”

Gorgo let out a lonely cry. He didn't even look at the bicycle.





“See? He hasn’t eaten anything since yesterday,” Boneham said sadly.

“All he does is cry out with heartbreaking
bluuuuuuuuuüüüü!”

Creepella shook her head, worried. “I’ve never seen him like this,” she agreed. “Did you try throwing him an old, **DISGUSTING**, smelly shoe?”

Boneham nodded. “I did. He didn’t even notice it. It’s still **floating** down there!”

“This is serious,” Creepella said. “What if we try a box of delicious **RuSty** nails?”

“I already did,” the butler replied. “He didn’t touch one!”

Creepella frowned. “This is *very* serious. How about a nice bag of **ROTTEN** garbage? I’m sure he could never resist that!”



The butler sighed. “No. He wouldn’t even taste it!”

“This is **very, very, very** serious,” Creepella said thoughtfully. “There’s only one solution.”

“You’re not thinking —”

“I am!” Creepella cried. “We need a family reunion!”

The butler turned **PALE**. “Please think this through, Miss Creepella,” he said. “Remember the last reunion? It was so **LIVELY**, we had to rebuild an entire wing of the castle!”

Creepella’s green eyes sparkled. “That was a **FUN** party! But there won’t be any fun this time. We have a very serious problem to solve. Gorgo is **SICK**!”



FAMILY REUNION

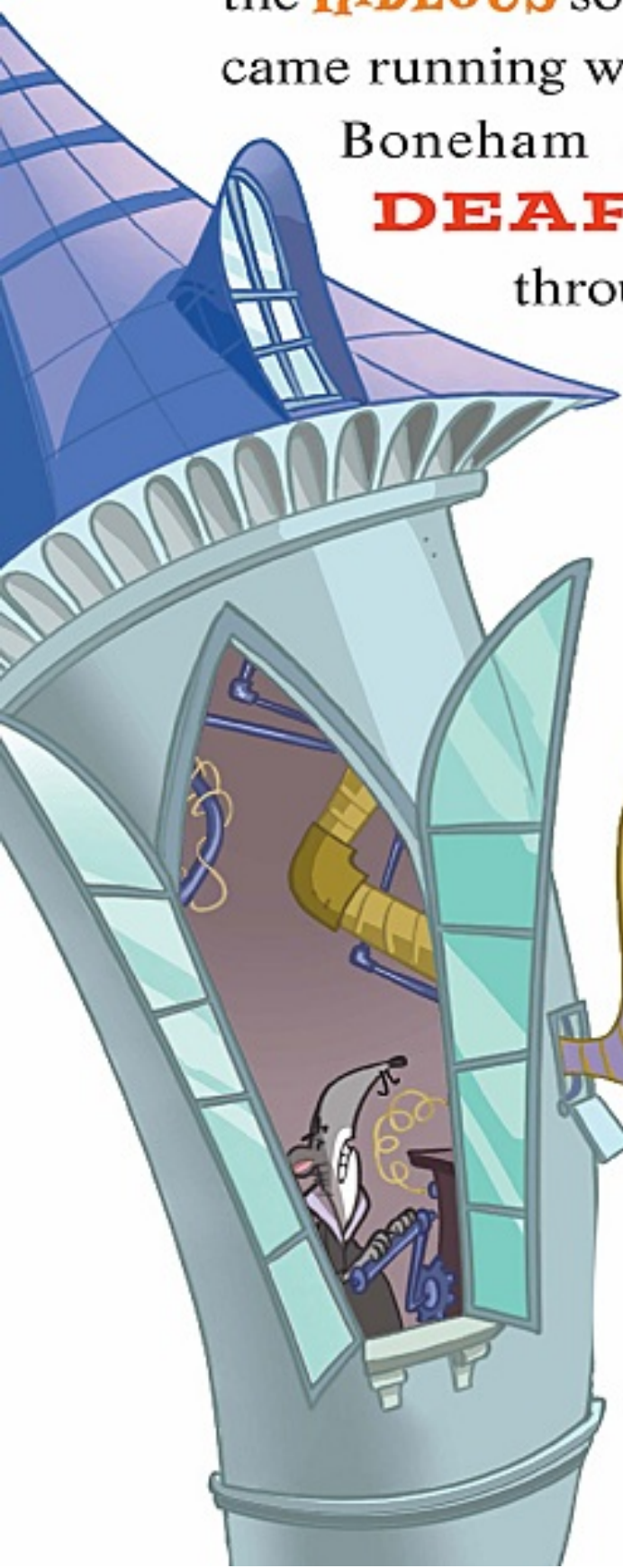
The butler ran up the **STAIRS** to the top of the tallest tower in Cacklefur Castle, **Bitewing's tower**. Grandpa Frankenstein's inventions were piled high in the small room. He created them all when he was a young mouse learning his trade at the Weird Wizard Shop.

Boneham went into the gloomy room and walked over to a large **MACHINE** covered by a heavy cloth. He pulled the **MOLDY** cloth aside to reveal a strange contraption, the **Cacklefur Emergency Alarm**. Everyone in the von Cacklefur family knew



the **HIDEOUS** sound it made, and they always came running when they heard it.

Boneham turned the crank, and a **DEAFENING** sound echoed through all of Mysterious Valley.

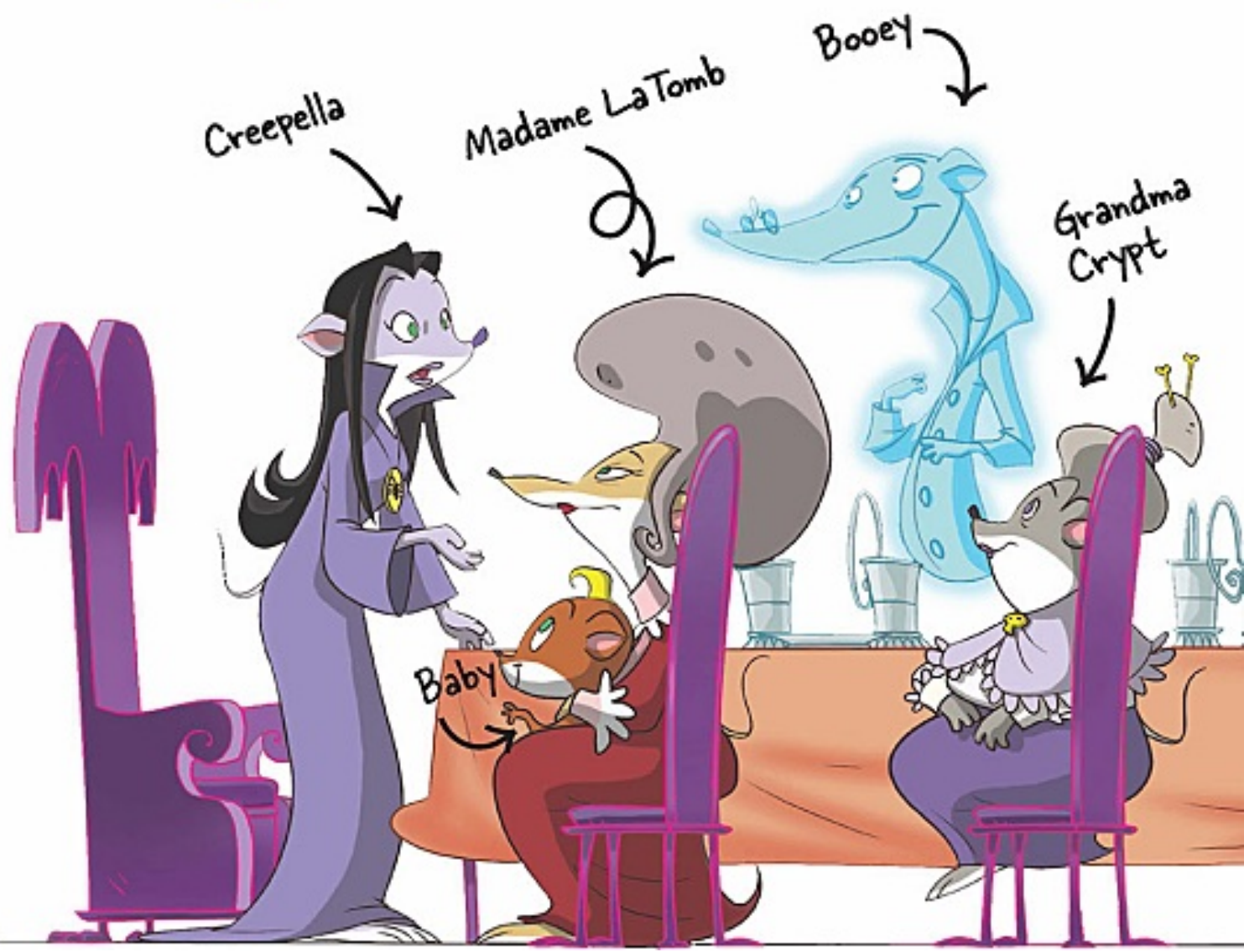


ALARM!
ALARM!
ALARM!

One by one, each member of the von Cacklefur family gathered in the **BANQUET HALL**.

“**Welcome!**” Creepella told the group. Her voice was serious. “I have assembled you here because we have a problem.”

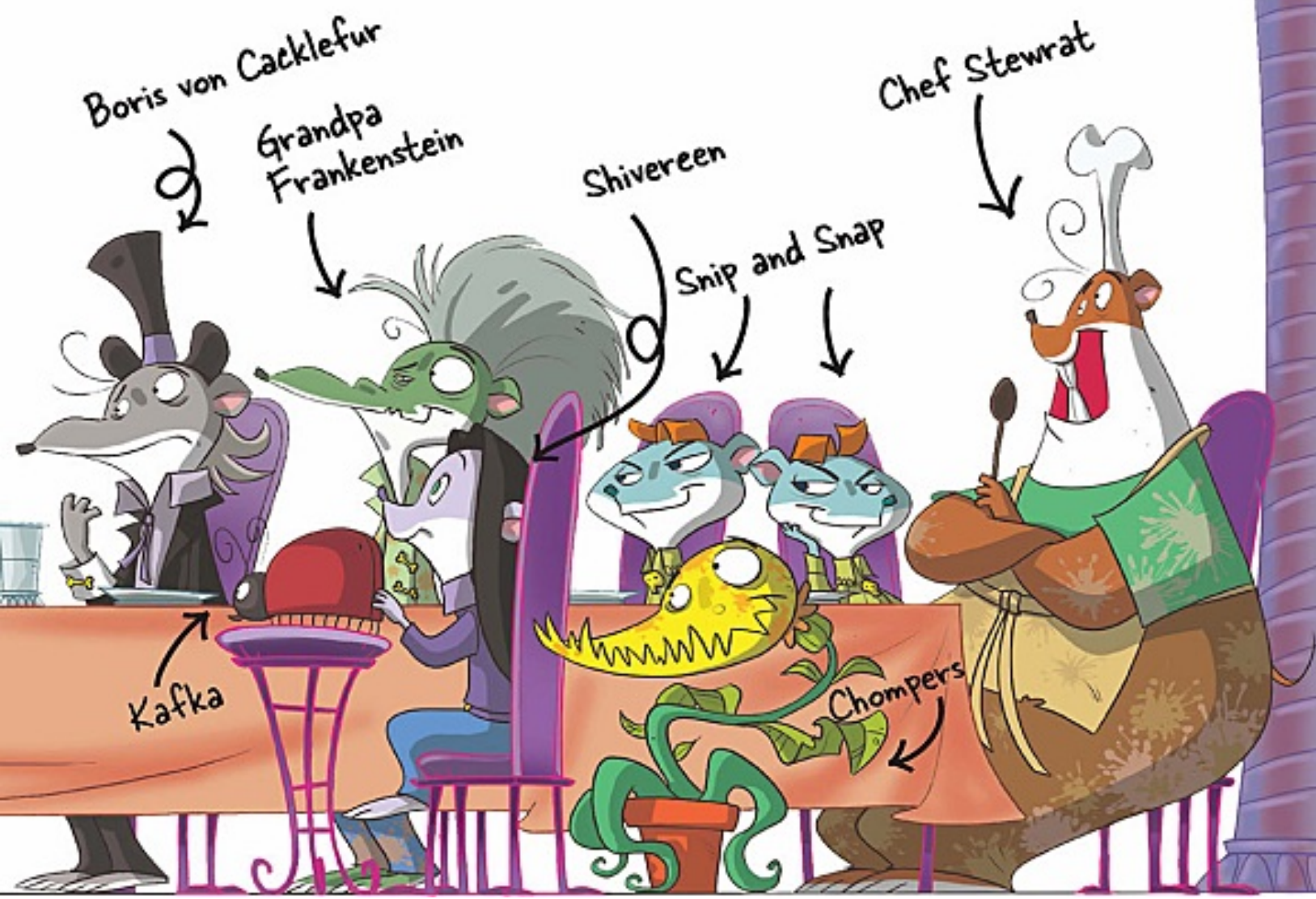
“**Gorgo is sick!**” Shivereen exclaimed.



The family members exchanged worried and confused glances.

“Sick? What are his **symptoms**?” asked Madame LaTomb, the family housekeeper.

“His color is sickly . . . it’s not as bright as his usual **SLIME GREEN**,” Creepella began.







The banquet hall got very quiet. Everyone was very worried about Gorgo.

Then a **LOUD** voice rang out. “Hmm. Pale color . . . a **sad** cry . . . no appetite . . . but of course! The symptoms are clear!”

The voice belonged to Grandma Crypt. She jumped up on her chair.

“I know what’s the matter with Gorgo!”

Every creature in the hall looked at her — even **KaFka**, the pet cockroach, and **CHOMPERS**, the meat-eating plant.

“It’s just like the main character of the last book I read, *Without You My Heart Molds*, written by Billy Squeakspeare,” Grandma Crypt announced. “Gorgo is in **love**!”

“Gorgo is in love?” everyone asked at once. “In love with whom?”

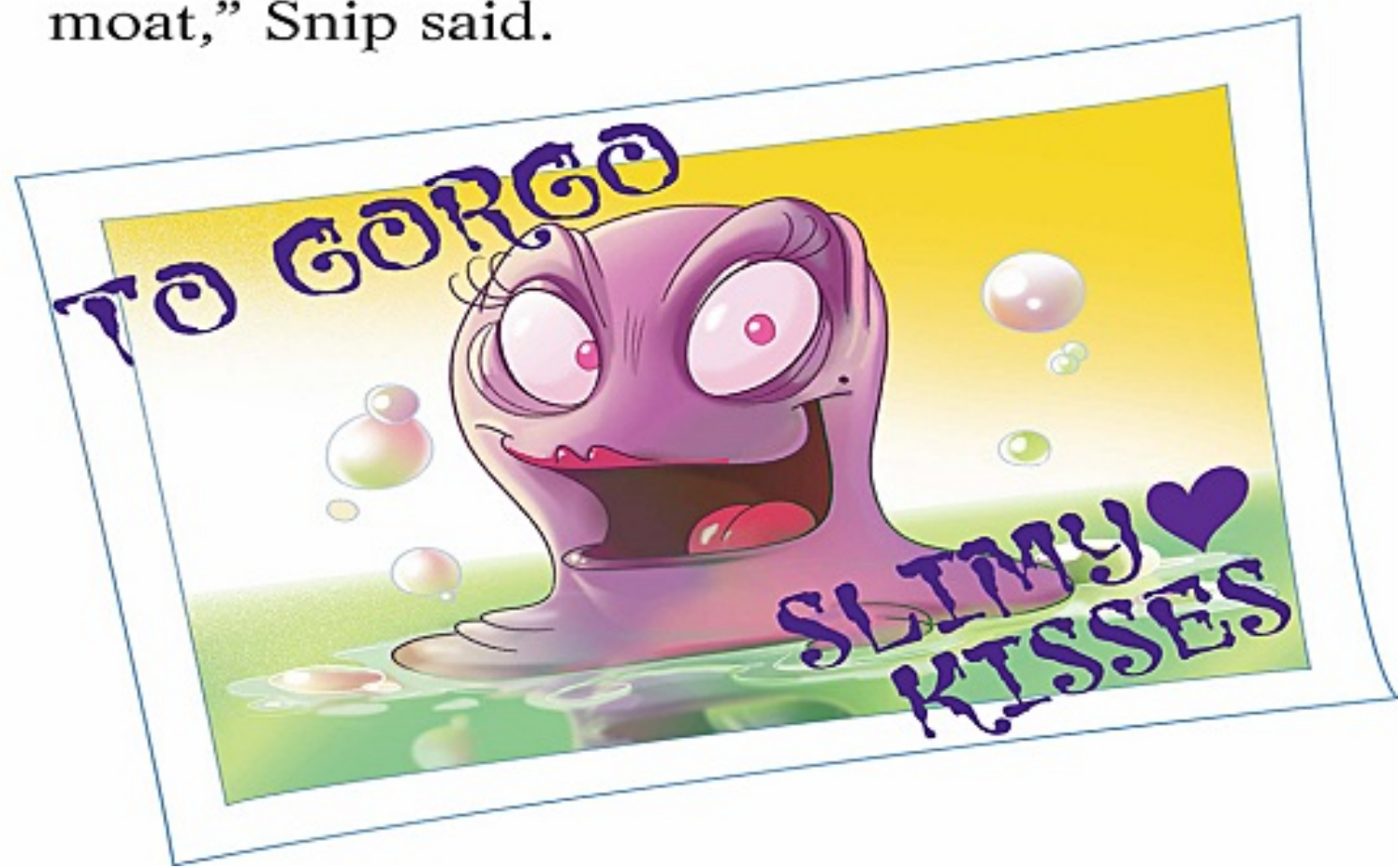
Grandma Crypt shrugged. “I have no idea.”

“**We do! We do!**” chanted Snip and Snap, the troublemaking twins. “If we tell you, can we get a second serving of stew cake?”

Creepella scowled at her nephews. “Cake? Gorgo is **SICK** and the only thing you can think of is cake? You’d better tell us what you know right now!”

Snip took a **POSTCARD** from Snap’s pocket and handed it to Creepella.

“Here, we found it on the bank of the moat,” Snip said.



Mr. M.'s MONSTER CATALOG

BLOBBINA

Female monster and Horrorwood film actress

EDUCATION: Swamp School of Drama

AGE: A lady never reveals her age!

SIZE: Big, but perfect for a slime monster

FAVORITE FOOD: Wilted flowers

FAVORITE COLOR: Pale pink

FAVORITE PERFUME: Moldy Violets

FAVORITE BOOK: *Heart of Mud* by Billy Squeakspeare

IDENTIFYING MARKS: A dark purple mole by her mouth

It appears there may be only one other creature of this type in the entire world — a male monster.



“Gorgo really is in love!” Boris von Cacklefur exclaimed happily.

“And she’s a **MOvie Star!**” added Grandpa Frankenstein.

Madame LaTomb sighed. “It’s so **romantic**. As a young girl, I, too, was in love with a famous movie star. **Humphrey Bograt** was so handsome!”

The crabby canary snorted. “**LOVE!** What a waste of time.”

“Look who’s talking,” Creepella said, **POINTING** at Howler’s beak. “Did you forget how you fell head over wings for that saucy parakeet last year?”

The canary **blushed** and dove into the thickest part of Madame LaTomb’s hair.

Booey the ghost had a faraway look on his see-through face. “One can never forget



love,” he said. “It’s almost better than an old **RUINED** castle.”

“Yes, better than a velvet-covered **CASKET**,” added Boris.

“Or a great big pot of ten-year-old **STEW**,” Chef Stewrat said dreamily.

Creepella turned to Grandpa Frankenstein. “What about you, Grandfather?” she asked him. “Have you ever been **LOVESICK** like Gorgo?”

“Yes, my dear,” he replied. “Once, a lovely **MUMMY** broke my heart. But then I met Grandma Crypt, and the rest is history.”

The entire hall filled with deep sighs.

AH, LOVE!



Everyone started talking at once. They all wanted to help Gorgo win the **love** of his dreams.

Grandma Crypt was the family's best expert on love stories and remedies for **broken hearts**. "He needs to write her a nice love **LETTER**," she decided.

"Gorgo is too **shy** to write to her," Boris pointed out. He looked right at his daughter. "My dear Creepella, can you help him?"

"I'm on it!" she replied. "I'm going straight to my room to write the letter."



Secret stash of snacks (to improve concentration)



Lizard screen licker (to keep monitor clean)



Tarantula paperweight



Beetle pencil sharpener



Snail with white slime (to cover up mistakes)



Earthworm rubber bands



Creepella sat at her desk, picked up her tarantula paperweight, and took out a sheet of yellowed paper. Then she chose a pencil with a bright **Violet** tip. Her beetle nibbled on the tip until it was nice and **SHARP**.

“Now I can begin!” she exclaimed. “Hmm. How does one address a monster movie star?”

“Dear Sliminess . . .” **NO.**

“TO A MARVELOUS MASS OF MUD . . .” **NO, NO.**

“SMELLIEST LEADING ACTRESS . . .” **NO, NO, NO.**

Creepella shook her head. She **crumpled** up the third piece of wasted paper and threw it in the cauldron-shaped recycling bin.

“I’ve got it!” she shouted, and she began to write. . . .

Slime of my heart, there is no monster finer,
My name is Gorgo, your faithful admirer.

I have devoured all of your films, from A to Z
I even nibbled on the DVDs!

Your eyes are as dark as a stormy night,
You turn my stomach and make my heart take flight.

I live in Cacklefur Castle; you can get here by boat.
We can watch the sun as it sets over the moat.

If you visit I will give everything to you,
Bugs, garbage, and rusted metal, too.

Please, my beloved, answer me.

If you do, you will make me monstrously happy.
Disgustingly yours,
Gorgo

Bitewing flapped his wings.

“Are you done yet?”

Are you done yet?”

Are you done yet?”

he screeched.

“Yes! I’ve written a monstrously **romantic** letter,” Creepella replied. She handed him the sheet of paper. “You have to take this to Blobbina at Horrorwood Studios!”

“But the set is **SOOOOOO** far,” the bat complained. “It’s a long, tiring flight.”

Creepella opened a drawer and pulled out a box of **chocolates**.

Bitewing’s eyes got wide. He smacked his lips.

“Are those chocolate-covered **ants**?” he cried. “My favorite!”

“They’re all yours!” Creepella told him.



She threw some of the chocolate bugs in the air. Bitewing **SWOOPED** and **SOARED**, quickly catching each one in his mouth. Now he had the energy he needed for the long trip. He gripped the letter between his **TEETH** and flew out of the window.

Creepella started to work on another newspaper article. When she stopped to look at the clock, she saw that a few hours had passed.

"STRANGE!" Bitewing isn't back yet," she said with a frown. "And it's time for his favorite TV show, **SO YOU THINK YOU CAN FLY?** He never misses that. I must find him!"





A FRIGHTFUL MOVIE SET

Creepella jumped into her super-deluxe hearse and headed for the film studios in Horrorwood.

The famous director Sam Shivers was directing his new **HORROR** movie: a terrifying monster story starring Blobbina. The gossip columns were already saying that her role in *Shrieks and Monsters* could win Blobbina a **GOLDEN CLAW** award for



• **BEST ACTRESS** •

in a Horror Film.



“Bitewing!” Creepella called out. Then she **muttered** to herself, “Where could he have gone?”

Rodents of all shapes and colors were scurrying around the set. Actors practiced their lines. **Nervous** technicians moved lights and wires. Costume makers **HURRIED** by with armloads of material. Stagehands carried props from place to place.

Suddenly, Creepella heard a deep voice behind her.

“Your eyes are as **BEAUTIFUL** as swamp pearls.”

Creepella turned, but she couldn’t tell which mouse had spoken. Even so, she batted her lashes.

“Thank you,” she replied sweetly. “It must be my **eye shadow** made of ground beetle shell.”





Where is
Bitewing?

Watch where
you're going!

That looks great!

Faster.
We're late!

Ha-ha!



“Your hair is as **shiny** as swamp snakes,” the mysterious rodent continued.

Creepella giggled. “It must be my shampoo: **SUPER SLUG SLIME.**”

She moved toward a huge panel on the set. The voice sounded like it was coming from there.

“And your blond fur is as **bright** as the full moon!” the rodent exclaimed.

Creepella stopped. “Wait. My fur isn’t blond!”

She peeked behind the panel and saw that her admirer was actually an actor, practicing his **LINES** for a romantic scene. He looked at her, confused.

“May I help you?” he asked.

“Ah, no . . . I mean, yes!” she said. “Have you seen a little purple **BAT** around here?”





The actor nodded. "I think I saw one in the special effects warehouse next door."

She went to the warehouse and walked inside. It was completely **dark**.

"Crusty cobwebs! I can't see a thing!" Creepella complained. "I'll just turn on this light switch."

Creepella found a lot of things in the warehouse:

a **GHOST** costume,



a pair of werewolf **gloves**,



a set of **razor-sharp**
canine teeth,



and a wild cat mask with **tangled**
whiskers.



But she couldn't find Bitewing!

"I know what to do," she said. She took a little jar of mosquito jam from her pocket and held it in front of her.

***"Tiny little bat of my nightmares . . .
where are you?"***

she called out.



Soon she heard a fluttering of wings and Bitewing's cry.

“Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!”

“Finally! There you are,” Creepella exclaimed. “Did you deliver the letter?”

Bitewing slurped down his delicious snack. “**Yum, yum, yum**,” he said happily. “Well . . . I’ve been *flying* all over the place, but I can’t find Blobbina. Nobody seems to know where she is!”

“Hmm,” Creepella said thoughtfully. “It seems I have a new **MYSTERY** on my paws.” She briskly walked out of the warehouse. “Follow me,” she told Bitewing. “Maybe the director can give us a **C L U E**!”



A MONSTROUS LEADING LADY

They found Sam Shivers inside his trailer, drinking a glass of **swamp juice**. He was staring **sadly** at a poster of Blobbina on the wall.

Creepella stuck her head through the open doorway. “May I come in?”

Shivers didn’t answer. Instead, he sighed and wiped a **tear** from his furry cheek with his handkerchief.

Bitewing flew into the trailer and **circled** the director’s head. “*What’s wrong? What’s wrong? What’s wrong?*”

Sam Shivers **LOUDLY** blew his nose into his handkerchief.

Creepella stepped inside. “Mr. Shivers, we’re looking for Blobbina.”

At the mention of the monster’s name, Shivers burst out **crying**. He buried his face on his desk.

“What a disaster!”
What a tragedy!
What a calamity!

My directing career is over, done for, ruined!”

Then, very slowly and dramatically, he lifted his head and placed a paw on his forehead.

“I’ll have to go work in my aunt’s **earthworm** beauty salon!” he exclaimed.

Creepella did not like whiners. “Get ahold



of yourself!” she said sternly. “I’m sure things aren’t as **TERRIBLE** as that. Tell me what happened.”

The director sniffed noisily. “It’s about **BLOBBINA**, my leading lady,” he began. “She’s . . . she’s . . . she’s . . .”

“She’s *what*?” Creepella and Bitewing asked impatiently.

“SHE’S DISAPPEARED!”

Shivers shouted. Then he started to sob again.

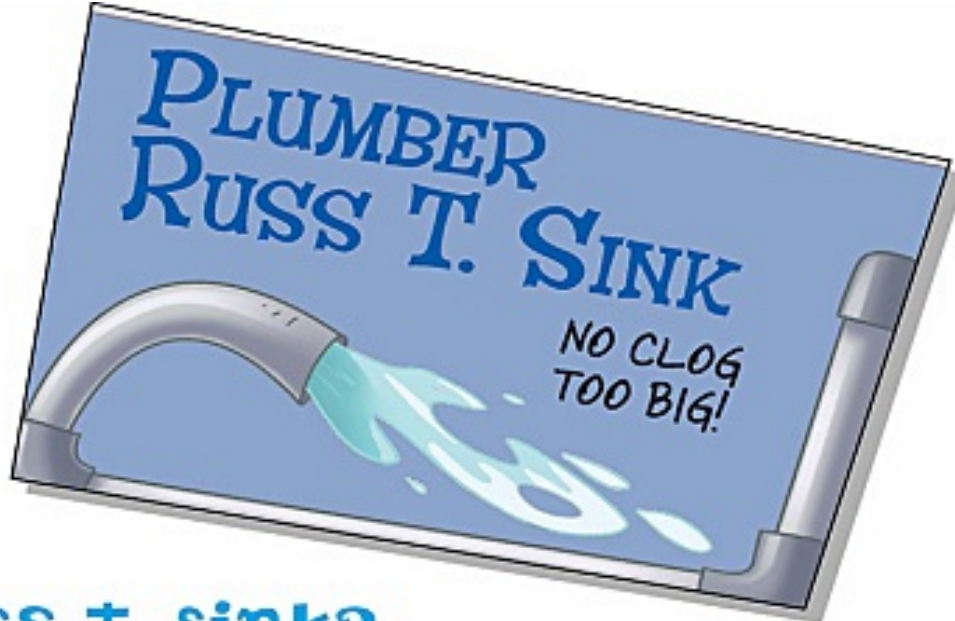
Creepella raised her left eyebrow. “I knew there was a mystery to solve,” she said. “Luckily, I know just who can help us.”

She took a stash of **BUSINESS CARDS** out of her pocket.

“Let’s see now,
here’s one.” She
read the card.

“**plumber RUSS T. sink?**

No, that’s not it.”



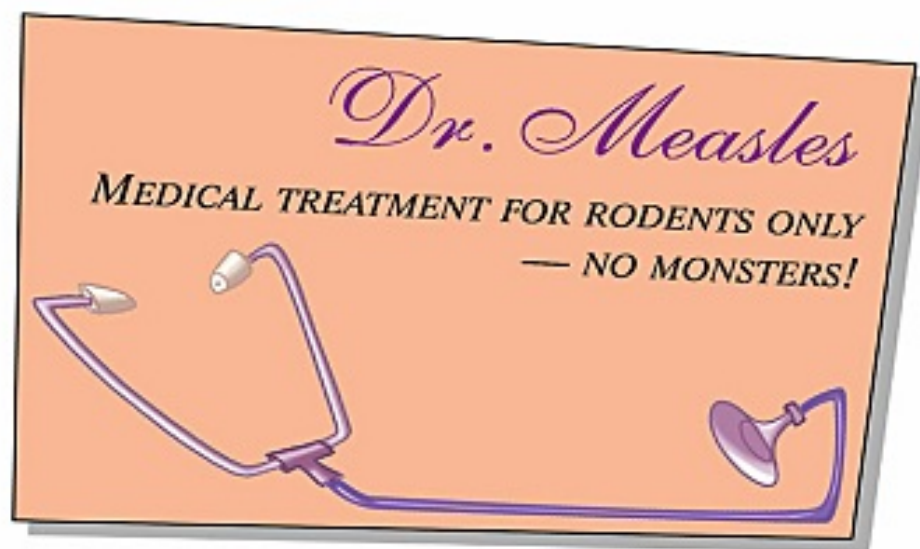
She looked at
another card.

“**MEDIEVAL
PACKAGE
DELIVERY?**

No, that’s not it,
either!”



She read
a third card.
“**Dr. Measles?**
Probably not. He
doesn’t know
a thing about
monsters.”



The director stared at Creepella. How could one mouse have **so many** business cards?

“**AHHH!** I’ve got it!” Creepella finally shrieked. “Here it is.” She waved the card under the director’s snout.



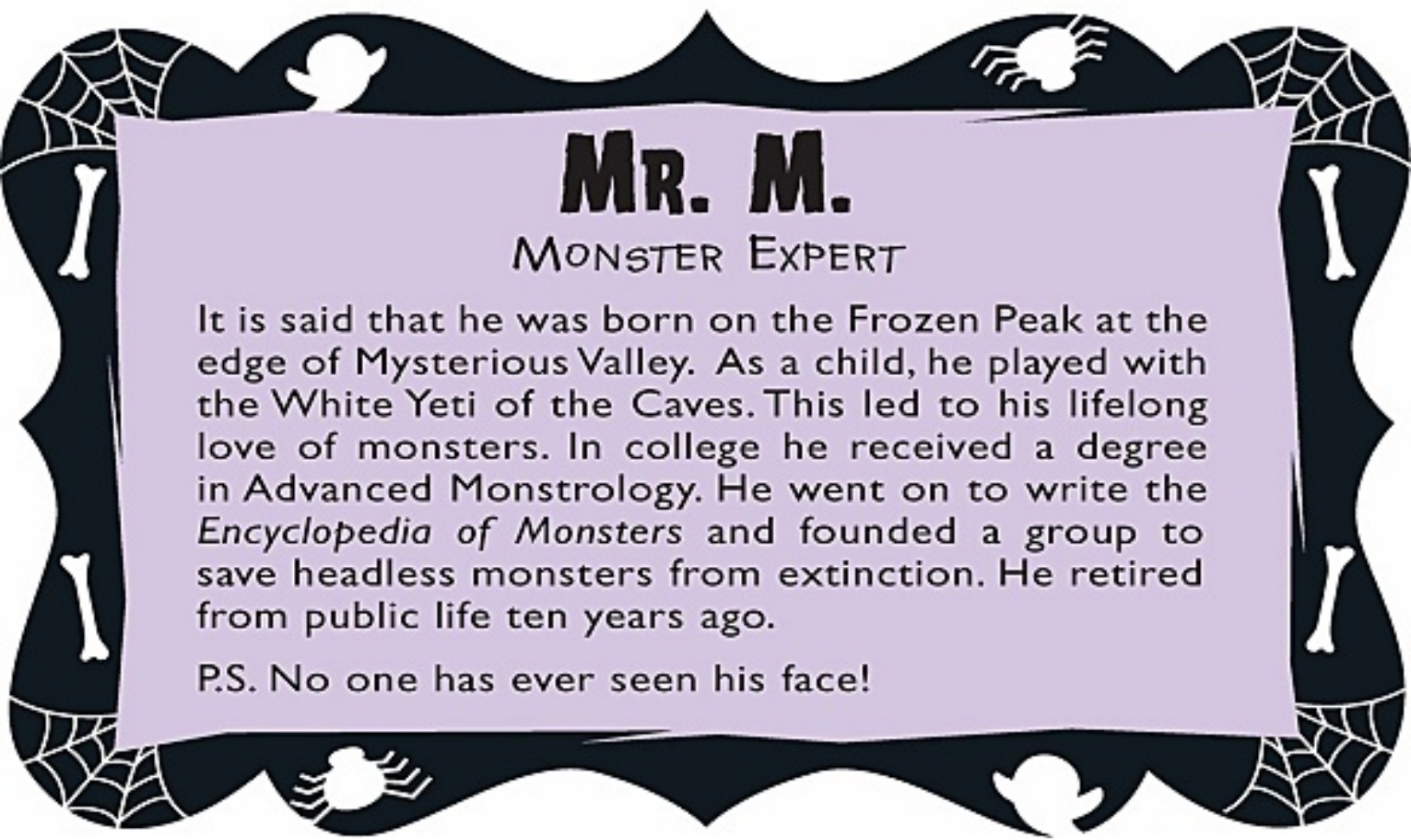
“Who is Mr. M.?” asked Sam Shivers. He sounded a little **SUSPICIOUS**.

Bitewing flapped his wings furiously. “What do you mean, ‘who is he?’ He’s the

most famous expert on monsters in Mysterious Valley! **BIG** monsters, **SMALL** monsters, **SMELLY** monsters, **SCARY** monsters, **SWEET** monsters, **SLIMY** monsters — he knows them all!”

“He’ll know how to help us,” Creepella added. She quickly **SCRIBBLED** a message and gave it to Bitewing.

“Take this to Mr. M.!” she cried.



MR. M.

MONSTER EXPERT

It is said that he was born on the Frozen Peak at the edge of Mysterious Valley. As a child, he played with the White Yeti of the Caves. This led to his lifelong love of monsters. In college he received a degree in Advanced Monstrology. He went on to write the *Encyclopedia of Monsters* and founded a group to save headless monsters from extinction. He retired from public life ten years ago.

P.S. No one has ever seen his face!

A DINNER INVITATION FOR BILLY

While Creepella searched for Blobbina, Billy Squeakspeare, the famous **AUTHOR**, was trying to take a nap in his bedroom at Squeakspeare Mansion. When he inherited the mansion, Billy learned he had to sleep during the day because the place was infested with **13 GHOSTS**.

Every night at the stroke of midnight, the ghosts would start cleaning the house. This woke Billy up every time, and he could never get





back to sleep. But napping during the day wasn't always easy, either. For instance, today someone kept ringing and ringing the doorbell. Billy reluctantly **DRAGGED** himself out of bed. A loud voice was calling out from behind the door.

"Express letter for Mr. Squeakspeare!"

"Wh-who is it?" Billy asked in a sleepy voice. He still had his **nightcap** on his head.

"I'm the messenger from Rattenbaum Mansion," the visitor replied. "I'm looking for the famouse Mr. Billy Squeakspeare!"

Billy opened the door and found himself facing a **BIZARRÉ** rodent wearing a strange costume. A tall white wig was perched on his head. His red uniform was trimmed in gold, but it was covered in patches, and **MOTHS** were flying out of it.

“Are you the famouse Mr. Billy —” began the messenger.

Billy **CUT** him short. “Yes, yes, that’s me, but —”

Before he could finish the sentence, the rodent gave him an old, **YELLOWED** envelope. Then he strutted away with his snout up in the air.

Puzzled, Billy turned the envelope in his hand. His great-great-great-uncle William,





the thirteenth **GHOST** in the mansion, appeared next to him.

“Nephew, is that envelope for me?” he asked.

“Actually, it’s for me, from the Rattin-bottoms . . . or maybe the Rottendams . . . or the Rittanbams . . .” Billy replied.

William looked excited. “Do you mean the Rattenbaums? They’re on my **WEDDING** list!”



“W-wedding?” Billy stammered. He was a very **NERVOUS** mouse. “Who’s getting married?”

“You, of course!” William said in his booming voice. “I jotted down the names of all the single female rodents in Mysterious Valley. There are three in the Rattenbaum household!”

Billy looked **TERRIFIED**. “Wh-what are you



talking about? I'm too young to get married!"

"‘Young’? You’ve already got **COBWEBS** on your face," said his great-great-great-uncle. "Now hurry up and open the envelope!"

With a sigh, Billy pulled out the letter.

"You know, I've heard that the Rattenbaum triplets are really **delightful**," William

To the Famouse Mr. Billy Squeakspeare,

We are happy to learn that a famouse author like yourself has settled in Gloomeria. Since you probably have not found anyone to socialize with in this bad-mannered city, you absolutely must come join us at the very elegant and sophisticated Rattenbaum Mansion for dinner this very evening.

We sincerely hope you will accept this invitation (in fact, we will not take no for an answer).

Our whiskers are twitching in anticipation of your visit.

The Most Noble Rattenbaum Family



assured him. He slapped Billy on the back, but his ghostly paw went right through him. “It would make me so happy if you would settle down and **MARRY** a nice rodent. That way, you’ll give me a little nephew who will grow up in this mansion.”

Billy had no choice. There was no use **ARGUING** — his uncle would hound him about it for **DAYS**! So he put on his **BEST** suit and tie and got ready to meet the triplets.



*There! Now you're ready
for dinner at the
Rattenbaum Mansion.*



FILTHY RICH OR JUST PRETENDING?

Billy rang the **BELL** of the Rattenbaum Mansion. He expected to hear the sound of musical chimes. Instead, he heard an earsplitting clattering sound, like a bunch of pots and pans banging together.

BANG **BANG** **BANG** **BANG**
BANG **BANG**


Billy jumped back and screamed loudly. Then he realized it was just the bell. **Embarrassed**, he looked around, hoping



nobody had seen him acting like a scaredy-mouse.

The outside of the mansion was dark, **SILENT**, and empty. A few scraggly trees covered in **GREEN** mold stuck up here and there. **THORNY** bushes wrapped around the tree trunks. The decorative columns on top of the mansion's towers looked like they were going to **collapse** at any moment. Loose window shutters banged back and forth in the wind.

"I must have the wrong address," Billy muttered. "This house looks like it's been **deserted** for years!"

He was about to leave when he heard an eerie creak and the door slowly opened. Then a gray  reached through the doorway, grabbed him by the collar, and dragged him inside.



broken
clock

falling
clay shingle

broken
window

missing
step



RATTENBAUM MANSION

17 Twilight Way
Gloomeria, Mysterious Valley

All original documents have been lost, but tradition tells us that the construction of this mansion began in 1313. The great Rattonzio Rattenbaum demanded a dwelling worthy of the strength and power of the Rattenbaum name. Over the years, Rattonzio's descendants have worked constantly to keep the mansion in its original glory. To date, there have been 217 refurbishments, 513 redesigns, 778 renovations, 471 reconstructions, 228 upgrades, 1,213 reductions, and 215 adjustments.

Lately, however, the present members of the Rattenbaum family decided to stop all renovations. Officially, they did this to preserve the history of the mansion. Unofficially, they did it because they ran out of money.

We do not suggest visiting the mansion because of the high possibility of falling ceilings, walls, and columns.



“Hurry up! Get in! You’re letting in the **COLD**!” snapped the gray-furred rodent. Do you know how much heating costs these days?”



Billy found himself in a **chilly** and dark entrance hall, snout-to-snout with a bizarre-looking rodent. He wore a black suit that had once been **ELEGANT**, but was now covered with patches. A squashed top hat sat on his head.

“Good day, Master Bobby,” the rodent said. “*Welcome* to our superluxurious mansion!”

“Actually, my name is Billy,” the author corrected him.

The gray rodent ignored him. “I am Shamley Rattenbaum, lord of the mansion! And these are my wonderful, marvelous, **enchanting** granddaughters.”

Shamley
Rattenbaum



Three rodents in evening gowns emerged from the shadows.

“Hi, I’m **Tilly**!”

“Hi, I’m **Milly**!”

“Hi, I’m **Lilly**!”

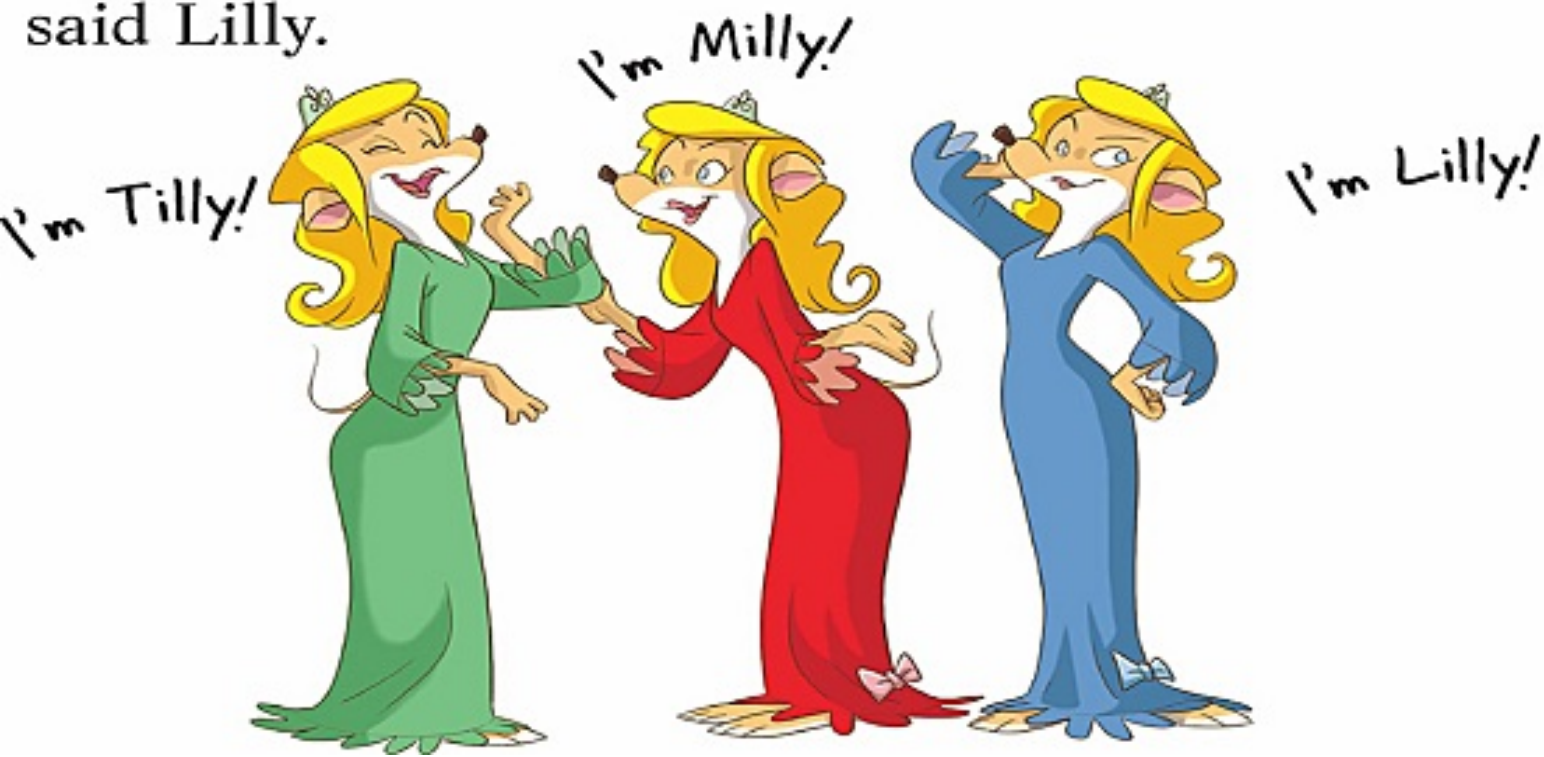
Billy cleared his throat and politely introduced himself.

“Ahem. Pleased to meet you. I am —”

Tilly interrupted him. “We know who you are!”

“Of course we do!” added Milly.

“We know **EVERYTHING** about you!” said Lilly.



“Of course, you know my granddaughters are **HIGH-SOCIETY** rodents,” Shamley bragged. “In fact, they couldn’t be any more **HIGH SOCIETY** than they are now.”

Then he leaned toward Billy. They were so close their whiskers were touching.

“How about you?” he asked. “Are you a **DUKE**? Maybe a **COUNT**?”

Billy didn’t know what to say. The Rattenbaums seemed to be obsessed with royalty!

“Let me guess,” said Shamley. “You’re a **prince**, right? I can tell just by looking at you!”

“Yes! I see it in your **uncombed** fur!” exclaimed Tilly.

“Yes! I see it in your **CROOKED** whiskers!” added Milly.

“Yes! I see it in your **WRINKLY** clothes!” concluded Lilly.

Shamley grabbed Billy by the collar again.



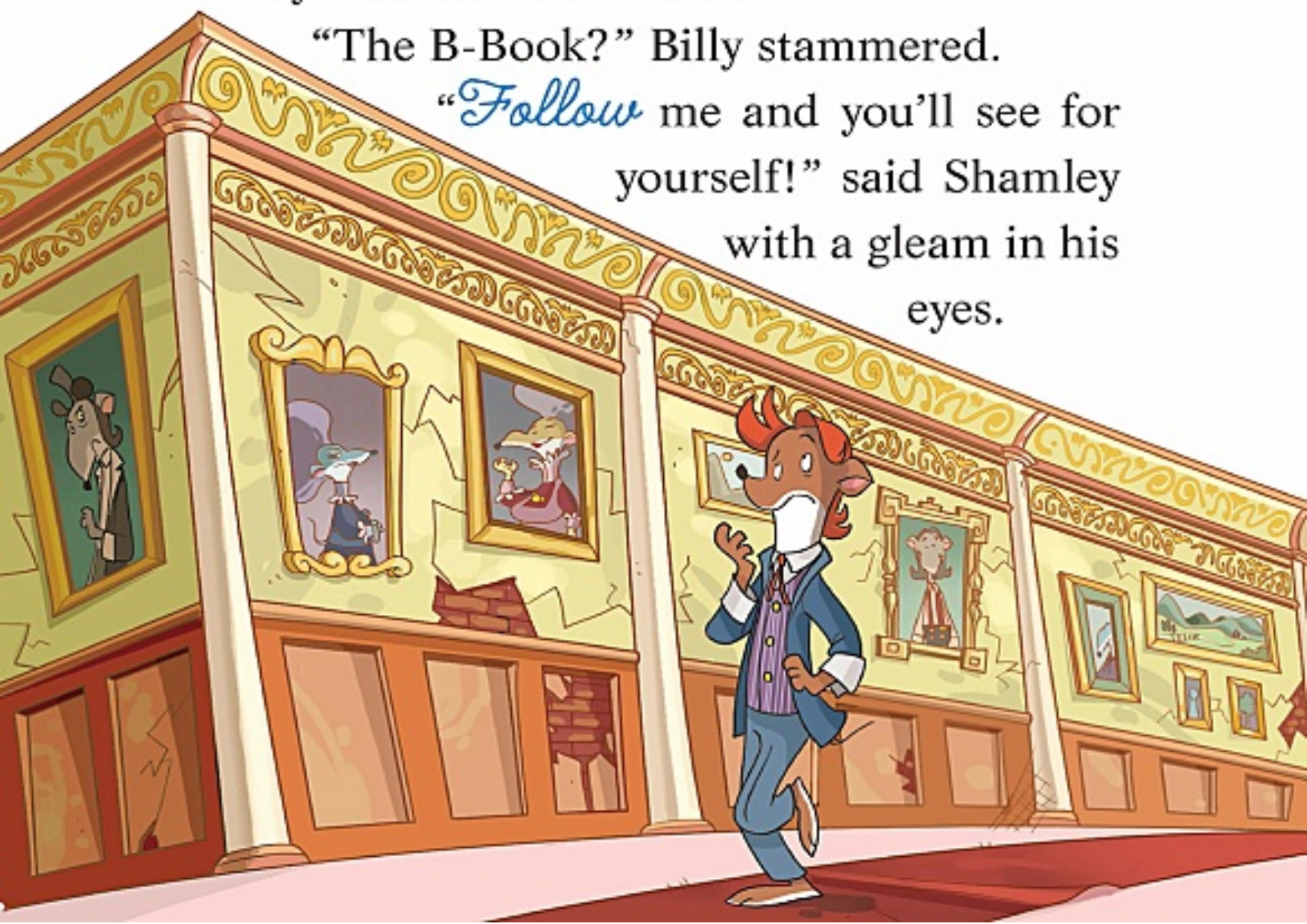
“Let’s go! We can find your history upstairs.”

The rodent pulled Billy down the dismal **HALL**. Dingy paintings of **grouchy**-looking rodents covered the walls.

“Here are the paintings of all of our **HIGH-SOCIETY** ancestors,” Shamley said proudly. “We are the **OLDEST** family in the Valley. It’s all in the Book.”

“The B-Book?” Billy stammered.

“*Follow* me and you’ll see for yourself!” said Shamley with a gleam in his eyes.





THE BOOK

Shamley stopped in front of a massive wooden **door** with a great big padlock on the knob. He searched his pockets and took out a **key**. Then he fiddled with the lock until the door opened.

Behind that door was another door secured with a **chain** and another lock. He opened that door to reveal a third small door with thirteen **DEAD BOLTS**. He opened the locks one by one. Finally, he pulled open the door and Billy saw a room behind it.

“Come!” he told Billy. “It’s time to consult the Book!”

The timid mouse cautiously followed



Shamley inside. The large room was filled with dusty objects that looked like they'd been around since the dawn of time. But the biggest item in the room was a truly **ENORMOUSE** book propped up on a stand.

Shamley climbed up a tall ladder, fixed his **EYEGLASSES** on the tip of his snout, and began to turn the huge pages.

"Let's see . . . Squeakino . . . Squeaksley . . . Squeakstail . . . Hmm. I can't seem to find you," he said.

Billy was puzzled. "What are you **LOOKING** for?"

"Your name, of course!" Shamley replied. "The Book has the names of all of the royal and high-society rodents in Mysterious Valley. It also has a family tree for each name. Every lord, lady, count, countess, duke, duchess, prince, and princess is in here."

Mechanical page-turner

Book stand



How to Live Like a
High-Society Rodent

Map of the Rattenbaums'
vacation property

Rattonzio Rattenbaum's
(empty) trunk



“Why should my name be here?” Billy asked.

“It’s obvious! Because you’re a **NOBLE**. Otherwise, how could I let you marry one of my **VERY NOBLE** granddaughters?”

“What? ‘Marry’?” Billy cried. “*Bouncing bookmarks!* ***I DON’T WANT TO GET MARRIED!***”

Shamley pretended not to hear him. “Does your name have a **C** in it, by any chance?”

“Of course not!” Billy said.

“A **Z**?” Shamley asked.

“Not that, either.”

“How about a double **X**?” Shamley tried.

Billy sighed. “Not that, either!”

“Hmm. Let me take another look,” Shamley told him.

No matter how hard he tried, Shamley could not find Billy’s name in the Book. But that didn’t bother him. He took a **pencil**

from his pocket. "I can just make a little addition here," he muttered to himself. He wrote a name in the Book.

Bobby Squeekspir

"Look! I found proof!" Shamley cried. "You're a noble! High society from the tip of your noble nose to the end of your noble tail."

He **JUMPED** down from the ladder and hugged Billy.

"Welcome to our family!"

Billy tried to get out of Shamley's grasp.

"It's always a pleasure to greet a **G-U-E-S-T** like you," Shamley added.

Once again, Billy was puzzled. Why was Shamley spelling out words?



His host explained. “And by **G-U-E-S-T** I mean **G**ive **U**s **E**xcellent **S**upport **T**oday.” Shamley cleared his throat. “As you can see, the magnificent design of this mansion is in need of some **REPAIR.**”

“*Some* repair?” Billy asked. “This place is a **DISASTER** area!” Right above his head, a tile was about to fall from the ceiling.

At that moment, a nasal voice **ECHOED** throughout the mansion. **ECHOED**
ECHOED

“The butler is happy to announce that **DINNER** is being served!”



THE INVISIBLE DINNER

The **ENTIRE** Rattenbaum family was seated around the rickety table in the dining room.

Lady Fifi, the triplets' grandmother, wore a dress that was the height of fashion — fifty years ago. Now it was covered in **Patches**. She walked over to Billy and held out her paw for a kiss.

“En-enchanted, my lady,” Billy said, giving a **CLUMSY** bow.

“Finally!” she exclaimed. “It’s been years since we’ve had a **GENTLEMOUSE** as a guest. Tonight, we are serving a very **SPECIAL** dinner in your honor.”

Shamley nudged one of his granddaughters.
“Milly, bring us the menu!”

“Grandfather, I’m Tilly!” she protested.

“Sorry, my little *cheesenip*,” her grandfather said sweetly. “You are all so much alike.”

Tilly handed Billy a **TATTERED** menu. “Here it is. It’s the latest fashion in high society: **INVISIBLE** dinner!”



INVISIBLE DINNER

APPETIZERS

VERY LIGHT CRACKERS

(So light they blew away!)

CHEESE BALL MADE OF AIR

FIRST COURSE

SEAWEED SOUP FROM A SEA THAT DOESN'T EXIST
WITH MEMORIES OF PASTA FROM DAYS PAST

SECOND COURSE

FILET OF RARE FISH

(So rare we were not able to find it!)

WITH AROMAS OF FORGOTTEN CHEESE

DESSERT

FANTASY CAKE

(Fantasize your favorite flavor and then imagine eating it.)

BEVERAGES

AN ASSORTMENT OF INVISIBLE JUICES
THAT HAVE NO TASTE

The butler began to serve dinner. Billy noticed he was also the messenger from earlier that day. There was **NOTHING** on his serving tray, and the dishes remained **EMPTY**. But the Rattenbaums were excited about every serving.

“How delicious!” the rodents exclaimed each time.

“Dear Shamley, please pour me some more of that juice,” said Lady Fifi. “It’s so **refreshing**.”

Shamley lifted the empty pitcher and pretended to pour something into his wife’s glass. Billy was **STUNNED**. Who ever heard of an invisible dinner? But most of all, he was hungry!

Just then, his cell phone rang.

Riiiiiiiiing Riiiiiiiiing Riiiiiiiiing



Billy was glad to have an excuse to leave the table. He quickly made his escape to another room.

“Hello, Billy-Willy?” asked the voice at the other end.

“Creepella? Is that you?” Billy asked.

“Of course it’s me!” she replied.

“Are you home? How are the **13 GHOSTS?**”

“No, actually I’m . . .”

Creepella interrupted him. “It doesn’t matter. I’m on a case and I need your help.”

“A c-case?” Billy asked.

“Right!” she answered. “This case is very **MYSTERIOUS**. I asked the advice of a monster expert . . . but there’s no time to talk. Meet me in front of Horrorwood Studios at the stroke of **MIDNIGHT!**”





“Th-the stroke of midnight?” That idea spooked Billy. But Creepella had already hung up.

The triplets caught up to him, **SURROUNDING** him.

“Bobby —” Tilly began.

“— who —” Milly continued

“— was that?” Lilly finished.

“That was my friend Creepella von Cacklefur,” Billy replied. “Do you know her?”

The triplets began to **SOB** hysterically.

“Wh-what’s wrong?” Billy asked.

“Don’t mention that **FLIRT**!” Tilly said with a sigh.

“She’s so **UNPLEASANT**!” Milly said with a sniff.

“And such a **SHOW-OFF**!” Lilly said with a sob.



Lady Fifi approached them. “Did I hear correctly, Count Bobby? Are you leaving us?”

Billy nodded. “Actually, I have another appointment. I have to go to the **MOVIE STUDIOS.**”

“Then I hope you will bring the girls with you,” said Lady Fifi.

“**Yes!**” the triplets cried happily.

Billy gave up. He left the mansion with the three girls. They made a quick stop at his house so he could change his clothes. Then they headed toward **Horrorwood Studios.**



A MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT MEETING

“Shrieks and Monsters, scene sixteen, take one!” Sam Shivers yelled. **“Action!”**

The director had decided to shoot a scene without Blobbina in it. He was hoping the star of his film would appear before long. If not, his movie would be **RUINED!**

Billy entered the studio with the Rattenbaum triplets. The girls ran to Shivers, bubbling over with excitement.

“We want —” Tilly began.

“— to be —” Milly continued.

“— in your movie!” Lilly finished.

The director raised an eyebrow.



A MYSTERIOUS MIDNIGHT MEETING

“Hmm,” he said. “I might have a small part for you as **extras**.”

The girls squealed with delight. “We’re going to be actors!”

“I want a **TRAILER** all to myself,” said Tilly.

“A **golden** dressing room for me,” said Milly.

“A team of **Makeup artists** just for me,” added Lilly.

Just then, the studio clock began to toll midnight. Billy left the triplets with Sam Shivers and went to find Creepella.





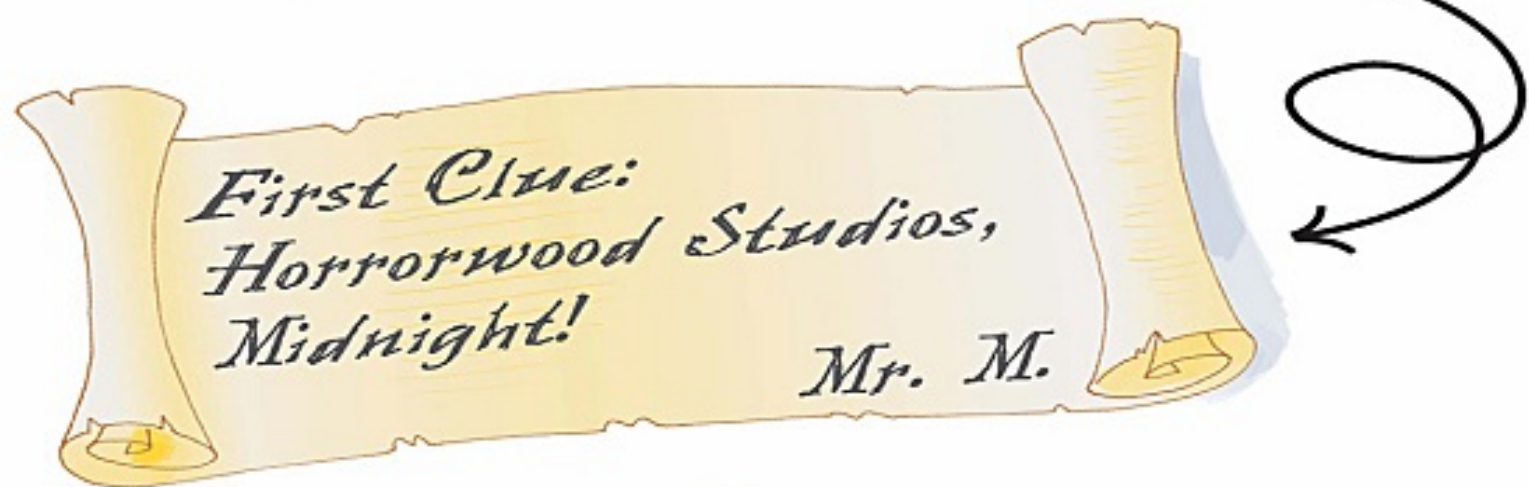
“Billy-Willy!” Creepella called out to him. “There you are. We must start the **INVESTIGATION** right away.”

“What’s going on?” Billy asked. “Why are we here so late?”

“Gorgo, our moat monster, is **IN LOVE** with Blobbina, Horrorwood’s greatest star,” Creepella explained quickly. “But she **DISAPPEARED**. And our monster expert—”

“M-monster expert?” Billy stammered.

“That’s right,” Creepella said. “Mr. M. is the greatest **MONSTER** expert in Mysterious Valley. He told me to be here exactly at **MIDNIGHT**. He sent me a note.”



“What does this have to do with me?” Billy asked.

“I need a partner on this case,” Creepella explained. **“Let’s go!”**

The whole plan **scared** Billy. “Wh-where?”

Then he heard the gloomy sound of a funeral march. Creepella’s cell phone was **ringing**.

“It’s a **message** from Mr. M.!”



**SECOND CLUE:
NIGHTMARE PARK ...
MR. M.**



“Wh-what’s Nightmare Park?” Billy asked nervously.

“It’s a **FANTASTIC** place!” Creepella replied. “It’s an old **amusement park** on the eastern wing of the studios. Nobody ever goes there anymore.”

“So why should *we* go there?” Billy asked.

“To solve this **MYSTERY!**” she answered. She grabbed his arm and began to drag him toward the park.


Wh—where are we going?



To solve this mystery!



WATCH WHERE YOU PUT YOUR PAWS!

They followed the  *path* to the east wing of Horrorwood Studios. They soon found themselves facing the huge walls of <NIGHTMARE PARK>. They pushed open the massive **METAL** doors, which closed behind them with a loud clang.

They looked around and saw they were in a thick **FOREST**. The path in front of them forked in several directions.

Billy scratched his head. “Which way do we go now?” he asked as he **LEANED** against the nearest tree.

BADA BAM!

NIGHTMARE PARK

KEEP
AWAY

Do Not
ENTER

SCRAM!

EXIT!

NO! CLOSED!

NO
ENTRY!



The tree crashed to the ground. Billy grabbed helplessly at the empty air, but then he, too, fell with a thud.

“Billy, you’re so clumsy!” Creepella scolded. “You toppled a **prop**!”

Billy stood up, dazed. “Prop?”

“These aren’t real trees,” she said. “They’re **PAINTED** panels!”

“**BOUNCING** bookmarks!” Billy exclaimed. He looked behind another tree. It was completely flat! “Is the entire forest **fake**?”

“The Dark Forest was one of the biggest attractions in Nightmare Park,” Creepella explained. Then she pointed.





“And down there is the Black Lake! See? The water is as black as **INK**.”

She inched closer to him. “They filmed the blockbuster *Tentacles, Tentacles* in that lake.”

Frightened, Billy took a step backward. He tripped and his paw hit a **BUTTON** hidden between the rocks. The water in the lake began to boil and bubble. From the center of the lake, a **MYSTERIOUS TENTACLE** wriggled out like a giant snake. It slithered toward Billy and grabbed him by the ankle.

“**Heeeeeeeeee!**”

Billy cried. The monstrous tentacle dangled him **NMOM UPSIDE DOWN** over the lake and shook him to and fro. He opened his mouth to scream again, but he froze when he found himself staring at two large, **EVIL-LOOKING** green eyes.







“Billy, please don’t waste time playing with the **GIANT OCTOPUS**,” Creepella scolded. “We’ve got a mystery to solve!”

“**Heelp meeee!**”

Billy screamed.

Creepella chuckled. “I’ll turn it off,” she said. She walked around the lake to the panel that controlled the robot octopus. She pressed the first button she saw. The octopus’s tentacles began to wave faster and faster!

“**I’m getting seasick!**” Billy cried.

“Whoops! I’ll try this one,” Creepella said, pressing another **BUTTON**.

The octopus stopped for a moment. Then it started to tickle Billy with the tips of its tentacles. Billy couldn’t stop laughing.



“Ha ha ha! Hee hee hee! Ho ho ho!”

Creepella placed her hands on her hips. “This is nothing to laugh about, Billy! We’re wasting precious time!”

She impatiently pressed the third **BUTTON** on the panel. The octopus finally stopped moving and let go of Billy.

➤ **Splash!** ➤

Billy swam back to the shore as fast as his arms could get him there.

“Why, oh why, didn’t I stay home?” he wailed.





THE LAST CLUE

Creepella stomped away from the lake. “I can’t always wait for you, Billy!” she called behind her.

“Wait!” he shouted, wringing out his **SOGGY** clothes. “Don’t leave me here alone!”

He tried to catch up to her, but he tripped on something and landed once again with his snout in the **GRASS**.

“Let’s try that trail,” Creepella said, pointing to a narrow **GRAVEL** path. “What do you think, Billy? Billy? Where did you go?”

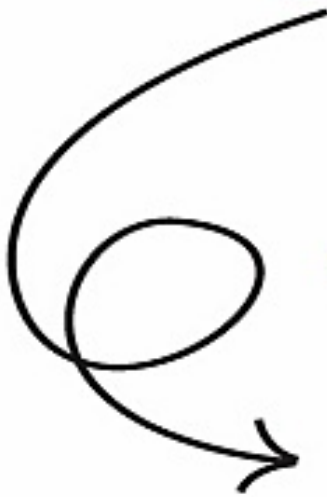
“UMPF BERT!”

Billy replied through a mouthful of grass.

“I can’t believe it! You fell again?” Creepella asked.

“Yes, but . . . **plfff!**” Billy spit out a clover. “I tripped on a **magnifying glass**. People will leave anything lying around, won’t they?”

“Let me see that!” Creepella bent down. “There’s a **NOTE** from Mr. M. here!”



Look where you
put your paws!
Mr. M.





Creepella grabbed the magnifying glass. She walked down the *path*, carefully examining the ground before she took each step. Soon she saw a pink *stain* on the gravel.

“That looks like pink *SLIME!*” she exclaimed. “Let’s keep following it.”

Billy kept pace behind her. After a few more steps they saw a row of pink tentacle **P R I N T S** that veered off of the path.

“Those must be Blobbina’s tracks!” remarked Creepella,





pleased with the discovery.

They followed the tracks down a new path. Billy saw nothing but darkness ahead. Then he made out the shadow of a **GLOOMY** castle. A **feeble light** shone from the castle's highest tower.

"L-let's go home," Billy said, his teeth chattering from **fright**.

But Creepella was already running ahead.





She stopped in front of a large drawbridge that looked very unsteady. The moat below was so deep and murky that she couldn't see the bottom. Here and there, yellow **SLANTED EYES** peeked out of the dark water. Then the sound of chomping **TEETH** filled the night air.

Billy caught up to her. "Wh-what is that?" he asked.

"**crocodiles**, I think," Creepella replied calmly. She crossed the bridge, and Billy followed her, his tail **twitching** with fear.

They entered the castle. The only light inside came from the full moon shining through the windows.

"I saw a light up in the tower," Creepella said. "Let's go there!"

A long and narrow staircase led to the top.





Creepella took the steps two at a time. Billy **SCRAMBLED** to keep up with her, breathing heavily. Through the small windows in the tower wall he could see the forest down below.

“L-looks like we’re going up very high,” he said nervously. “I think we should s-stop here.”

“You aren’t afraid of **HEIGHTS**, are you, Billy-Willy?” Creepella asked. “Wait until I take you to the top of Bitewing’s tower in Cacklefur Castle. The view there will take your breath away!”

“Actually . . . *puff* . . . *pant* . . . I’m already out of **breath**!” Billy pointed out.

They **CLIMBED** . . . and **CLIMBED** . . . and **CLIMBED**. Finally, they reached the room in the top of the tower. It was a small room with stone walls.



“Wh-what’s that in the middle of the room?” Billy asked. “It looks like a casket!”

“In fact, it’s a **CASKET** made of crystal,” Creepella said. “Let’s take a look!”

Billy looked at the see-through walls of the casket and jumped back. Two huge eyes with long **EYELASHES** were staring at him!

Creepella wasn’t afraid. She lifted the lid of the casket and a pink **GELATINOUS** monster slithered out.

“**BLOBBINA!**” Creepella cried. “It’s you!”

Billy was confused. “This is B-Blobbina? I thought we were looking for a movie star, not a monster!”

“She is a **MOVIE STAR** — the most **MONSTROUS** star in the Valley, and we’ve finally found her!” Creepella exclaimed happily.

A-a casket?

D-don't
open it!

Blobbina!

This is a
movie star?





Billy stepped back from the pink slime on the floor, a look of **DISGUST** on his face. But Creepella thought Blobbina was beautiful. She talked to the monster in her own language.

“Bluvvup! Blu blu blu bluvvvvvvÿp!”

gurgled Blobbina.

“*Blvÿp?*” asked Creepella

“*Blvp!*” answered the monster.

Billy was **astonished**. “Do you really understand her?” he asked.

“**OF COURSE!**” Creepella replied.

“**MONSTERIAN** is taught to all the children in Gloomeria at a very early age. It’s tradition!”

Blobbina let out a heart-wrenching moan.

“Oh, poor thing!” Creepella exclaimed. “She told me she was **KIDNAPPED** by the evil Dr. Inkubus.”

“D-Doctor who?” Billy stammered.

“He is the old **caretaker** of Nightmare Park,” Creepella explained. “It used to be the star attraction of Horrorwood Studios. Oh, I remember the time I rode the marvelous

**Upside-Down
Merry-Go-Round**

But the park shut down right after that.”

“I’m not surprised,” Billy sniffed. “It really seems like a **HORRIBLE** place!”

DOCTOR INKUBUS

WHO HE IS: An expert in creating nightmares, shivers, goose bumps, and screams of fright.

WHERE HE LIVES: Since the park closed, he hides in a dark and secret corner of Horrorwood Studios. It is said he only comes out at night.

EDUCATION: He has a degree from Shivery Arts Academy. He majored in Screams, Shrieks, and Screeches.

HOBBY: He collects recordings of the most bloodcurdling screams in horror films.

HIS DREAM: To bring Nightmare Park back to its original splendor, with the same hair-raising attractions it had years ago.





“On the contrary, the horribleness of the place was a big draw,” Creepella said. “But after a few years, people stopped getting scared. So the park was abandoned.”

Blobbina interrupted her.

“Bluppp bluppt blu blub!”

“She said Dr. Inkubus dreams of reopening the park,” Creepella translated.

“Blup blup blup!”

“And he wants to force Blobbina to be the main attraction!” Creepella finished.

“Blup!” moaned Blobbina. A pink **TEAR** ran down her cheek.

“Poor thing,” Creepella said. “She belongs on the big screen, not **IMPRISONED** in an amusement park! We need to get her out of here!”

Creepella quickly dialed Cacklefur Castle on her cell phone.

“Boneham! There’s an **EMERGENCY!**” she said. “Hurry to **NIGHTMARE PARK’S** entrance. And bring the sidecar. You know, the one we use to bring Gorgo to the **SWAMP.**”

She ended the call and turned to Billy. “We have to get out of here! You go **first**, Blobbina will follow you, and I’ll bring up the rear.”

“Where do you think you’re going?”

Creepella turned and saw the **SKELETAL** shadow of Dr. Inkubus behind them.

“HE’S ONTO US!” she cried.

Blobbina slithered faster and bumped into Billy. The two of them rolled down the stairs together in a blur of **PINK SLIME**. Only Billy’s head and paws peeked out from the gelatinous goo.



Where do you
think you're
going?

Hurry!

Creepella ran after them.

HURRY! she yelled.

She gave the ball of slime a big shove, sending Blobbina and Billy tumbling out of the castle and **sliding** down the path. Dr.

Inkubus chased them, shouting, "Get back here! **That monster is miiiiiiiiiiiiine!**"

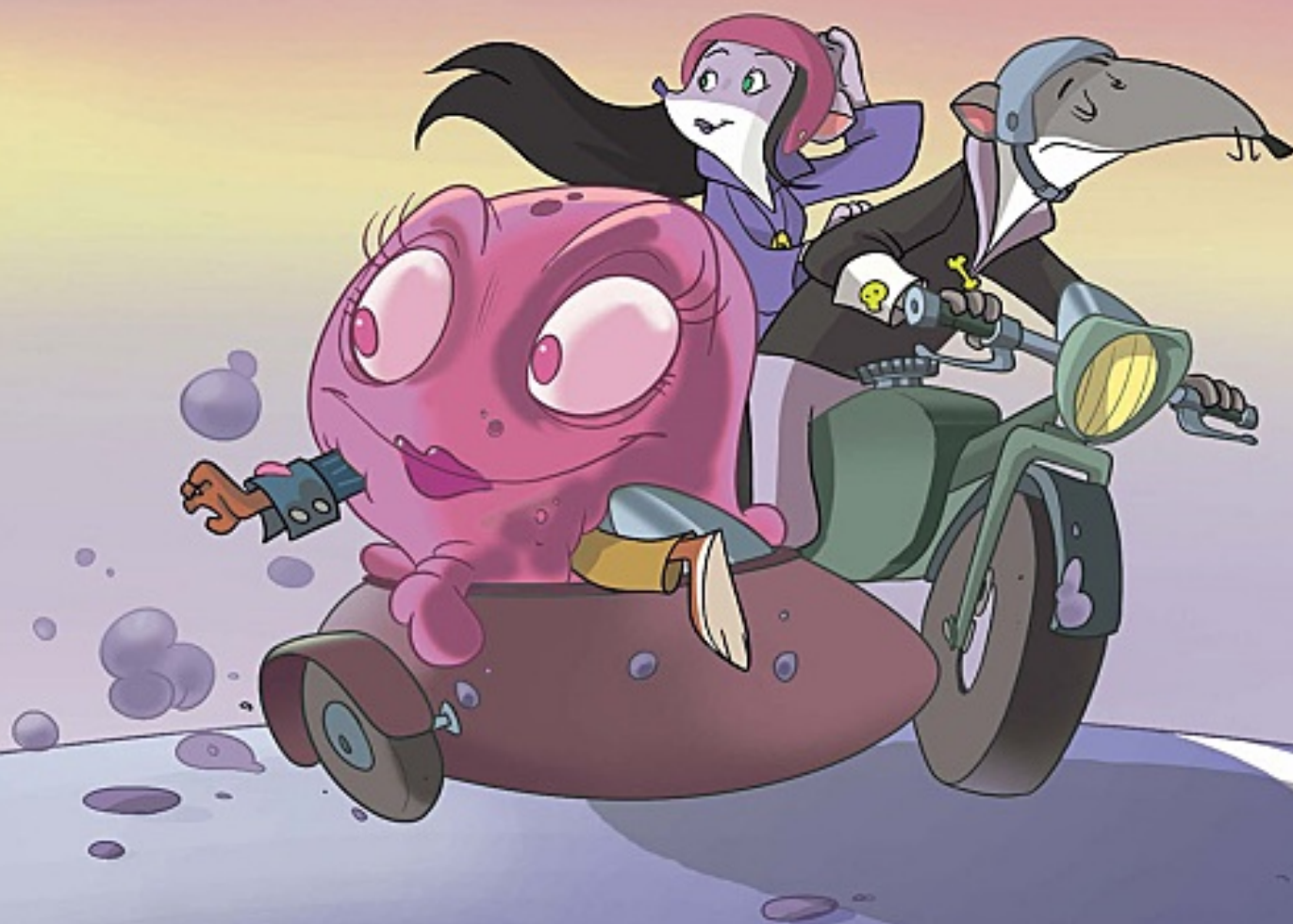
But he didn't get far. **BAM!** He slipped on a **BLOB** of pink slime and ended up flat on his back with his paws in the air.



The strange trio arrived at the park entrance to find Boneham on a motorcycle, honking the horn **loudly**. Creepella pushed the pink monster into the sidecar and jumped on the seat. Billy was still stuck inside the glob of pink **GOOOO!**


“Step on it!” Creepella yelled. “To Cacklefur Castle!”

We did it!






WEDDING BELLS AT CACKLEFUR CASTLE

The sun was rising over the  HORIZON, brightening the sky over Mysterious Valley when Boneham's motorcycle stopped in front of Cacklefur Castle. He honked the horn several times, and the von Cacklefur family all came outside.

“Welcome back, Creepella!”

Bitewing cried. He pointed his wings toward Blobbina. “What is that *w*eird creature?”

“It’s Blobbina! We found her!” Creepella told everyone. “She was kidnapped by Dr. Inkubus.”

“How unusual,” said Boris von Cacklefur.

“Blobbina has a rodent’s **whiskers** and a *tail*.”

“Oh, that’s just silly Billy Squeakspeare,” Creepella explained. “Blobbina fell on him and he got trapped.”

“**BLECH!**” shrieked Billy, as he set himself free from the slimy pink monster.

Then the moat began to **BUBBLE**. Two surprised love-struck eyes stared out of the mud at Blobbina.

It was Gorgo.

“**BUBBLE!**”

gurgled

Gorgo

happily

when

he saw

Blobbina.




“**Blip!**” Blobbina answered, batting her eyelashes.

Grandma Crypt sighed loudly and held her hands over her heart.

♥♥♥ **“AH, LOVE...”** ♥♥♥

Boris nodded. “The two of them are made for each other. Just look at them!”

Shivereen ran to Creepella, holding a piece of paper. “Auntie, this just arrived! It’s from **Mr. M.**”

Billy took a **BACKWARD STEP**. “W-well, it’s time for me to go,” he said. But a  grabbed him by the sleeve.

“No, no, my Billy-Willy,” said Creepella. “You can’t leave now. You have to stay here for the **rehearsal!**”

Congratulations!

You have brilliantly solved the case (thanks to my clues, of course!) For now, at least, the Valley is safe from evil Dr. Inkubus and his wicked plans. Blobbina is safe. Besides . . . well, you already know. She and Gorgo have been in love for some time! I believe that soon there will be a beautiful wedding at Cacklefur Castle.

Please send me the photos for my next book, Monstrously Romantic Moments.

**SINCERELY,
MR. M.**





Hooooooray!

Hooray for the
happy couple!

Ah, love!



“R-rehearsal?” Billy stammered.

“Yes, the wedding rehearsal,” Creepella said. “You can be Gorgo’s **BEST MAN**, and I’ll be Blobbina’s **maid of honor**!”

Billy **fainted** on the spot, but the ring of his cell phone quickly woke him up. The Rattenbaum triplets had left him a message.

“Bobby, where are you?” they whined. “We got you a part in the movie. You have to lower yourself by the thread of a **Spider’s Web** into the Bottomless Well! Aren’t you happy?”

Billy **fainted** again. Meanwhile, Grandpa Frankenstein brought a pail filled with old, **Rusted** screws to the moat.

“Our **GORGGO** seems happy now,” he said. “But let’s test just to make sure.”

He threw the pail of rusty screws into the moat. Gorgo gobbled up every last one. He



ate everything but the handle, which was too clean and new for him. He spit it out — and it hit Billy right in the face! The poor writer, who was just beginning to come to, **fainted** for the third time.

★ “**Gorgo is better!**” ★ ★

Creepella cheered. “It’s a happy ending to a scary story — the perfect story to send to my friend *Geronimo Stilton!*”

THE END



THE NEWEST SENSATION IN HORROR!

After I finished reading Creepella's book, Bitewing chuckled.

"Good story, right? So, did you figure out who's getting **married?**" the bat asked me.

"Of course," I answered. "The two **MONSTERS** of Mysterious Valley: Gorgo and Blobbina!"



"Exactly!" the bat snickered.

"That's why I brought you this tombstone-shaped **WEDDING** invitation. You're invited! Are you ready to go?"

"Hmm . . . a wedding between monsters?"

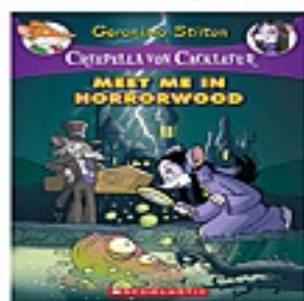


I said with a shiver. “**Brrr!** My whiskers are curling from fright!”

Bitewing fluttered around my head. “No excuses! The trip is already booked. But before you go, you have to publish this **BOOK . . . PRONTO!** In fact, Creepella’s already working on her next one.”

I couldn’t argue with the bat. It’s clear to me that Mysterious Valley is home to a truly fabumouse author of **SCARY STORIES . . .**

CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR!

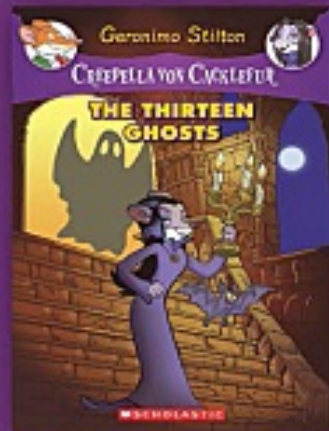
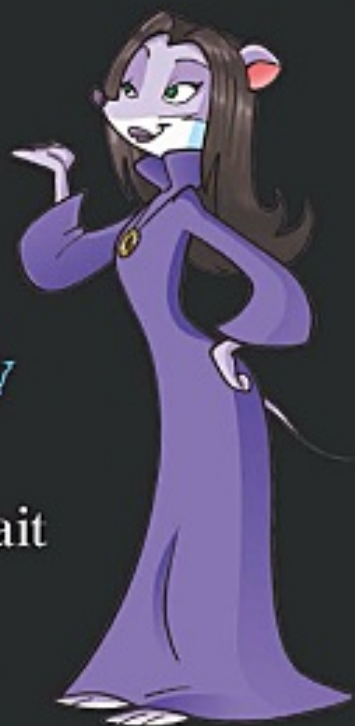




Meet

CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR

I, *Geronimo Stilton*, have a lot of mouse friends, but none as **spooky** as my friend **CREEPELLA VON CACKLEFUR**! She is an enchanting and **MYSTERIOUS** mouse with a pet bat named **Bitewing**. **YIKES!** I'm a real 'fraidy mouse, but even I think **CREEPELLA** and her family are **AWFULLY** fascinating. I can't wait for you to read all about **CREEPELLA** in these **fa-mouse-ly funny** and **spectacularly spooky** tales!



#1 The Thirteen Ghosts



#2 Meet Me In Horrorwood



#3 Ghost Pirate Treasure

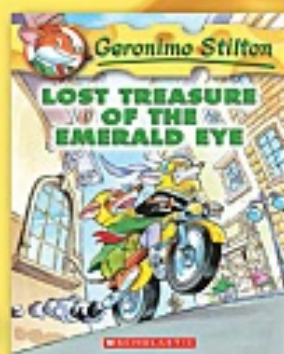


#4 Return of the Vampire

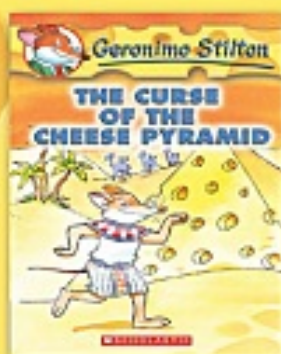


#5 Fright Night

**Don't miss
any of my
fabumouse
adventures!**



**#1 Lost Treasure
of the Emerald Eye**



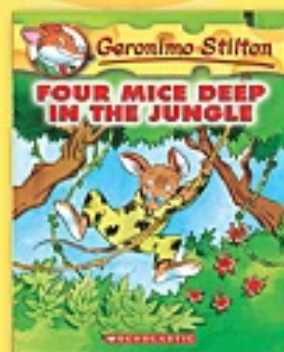
**#2 The Curse
of the Cheese
Pyramid**



**#3 Cat and
Mouse in a
Haunted House**



**#4 I'm Too Fond
of My Fur!**



**#5 Four Mice
Deep in the Jungle**



**#6 Paws Off,
Cheddarface!**



**#7 Red Pizzas for
a Blue Count**



**#8 Attack of the
Bandit Cats**



**#9 A Fabumouse
Vacation for
Geronimo**



**#10 All Because of
a Cup of Coffee**



**#11 It's
Halloween, You
'Fraidy Mouse!**



**#12 Merry
Christmas,
Geronimo!**



**#13 The Phantom
of the Subway**



**#14 The Temple of
the Ruby of Fire**



**#15 The Mona
Mousa Code**



**#16 A Cheese-
Colored Camper**



**#17 Watch Your
Whiskers, Stilton!**



**#18 Shipwreck on
the Pirate Islands**



**#19 My Name Is
Stilton, Geronimo
Stilton**



**#20 Surf's Up,
Geronimo!**



**#21 The Wild,
Wild West**



**#22 The Secret
of Cacklefur
Castle**



A Christmas Tale



**#23 Valentine's
Day Disaster**



**#24 Field Trip to
Niagara Falls**



**#25 The Search
for Sunken
Treasure**



**#26 The Mummy
with No Name**



**#27 The
Christmas Toy
Factory**



**#28 Wedding
Crasher**



**#29 Down and
Out Down Under**



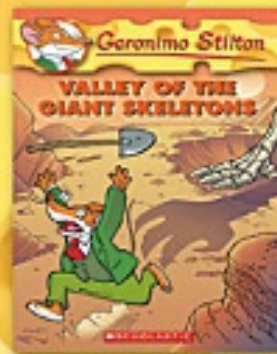
**#30 The Mouse
Island Marathon**



**#31 The
Mysterious
Cheese Thief**



**Christmas
Catastrophe**



**#32 Valley of the
Giant Skeletons**



**#33 Geronimo
and the Gold
Medal Mystery**



**#34 Geronimo
Stilton, Secret
Agent**



**#35 A Very Merry
Christmas**



**#36 Geronimo's
Valentine**



**#37 The Race
Across America**



#38 A Fabumouse School Adventure



#39 Singing Sensation



#40 The Karate Mouse



#41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro



#42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief



#43 I'm Not a Supermouse!



#44 The Giant Diamond Robbery



#45 Save the White Whale!



#46 The Haunted Castle



#47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!



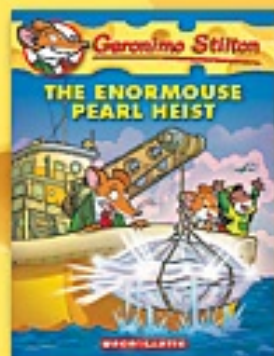
#48 The Mystery in Venice



#49 The Way of the Samurai



#50 This Hotel Is Haunted



#51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist



#52 Mouse in Space!



#53 Rumble in the Jungle



#54 Get into Gear, Stilton!



#55 The Golden Statue Plot



#56 Flight of the Red Bandit



**Special Edition:
The Hunt for the Golden Book**



**Check out
these exciting
Thea Sisters
adventures!**



**Thea Stilton and the
Dragon's Code**



**Thea Stilton and the
Mountain of Fire**



**Thea Stilton and the
Ghost of the Shipwreck**



**Thea Stilton and the
Secret City**



**Thea Stilton and the
Mystery in Paris**



**Thea Stilton and the
Cherry Blossom Adventure**



**Thea Stilton and the
Star Castaways**



**Thea Stilton: Big Trouble
in the Big Apple**



**Thea Stilton and the
Ice Treasure**



**Thea Stilton and the
Secret of the Old Castle**



**Thea Stilton and the
Blue Scarab Hunt**



**Thea Stilton and the
Prince's Emerald**



**Thea Stilton and the Mystery
on the Orient Express**



**Thea Stilton and the
Dancing Shadows**



**Thea Stilton and the
Legend of the Fire
Flowers**



**Thea Stilton and the
Spanish Dance Mission**



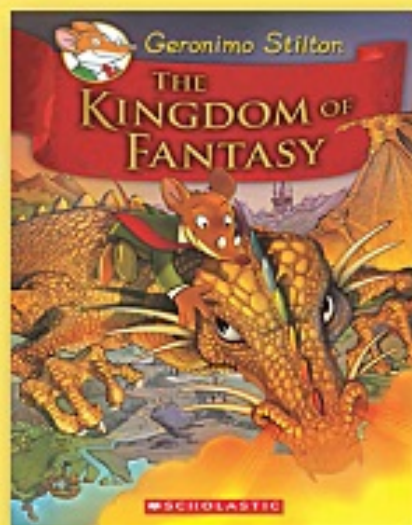
**Thea Stilton and the
Journey to the Lion's Den**



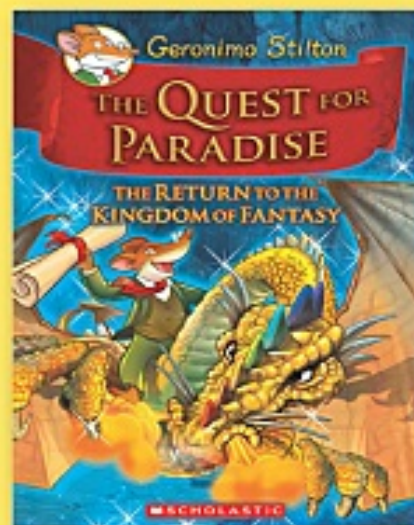
**Thea Stilton and the
Great Tulip Heist**



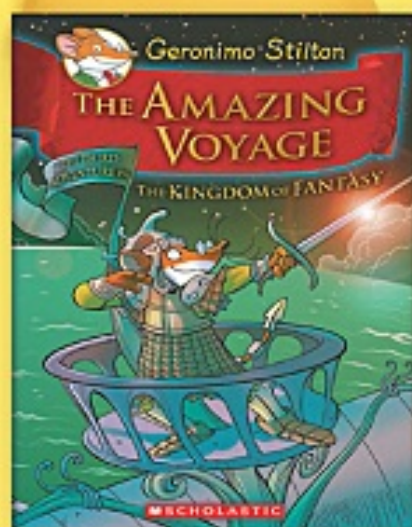
Be sure
to read all
my adventures
in the Kingdom
of Fantasy!



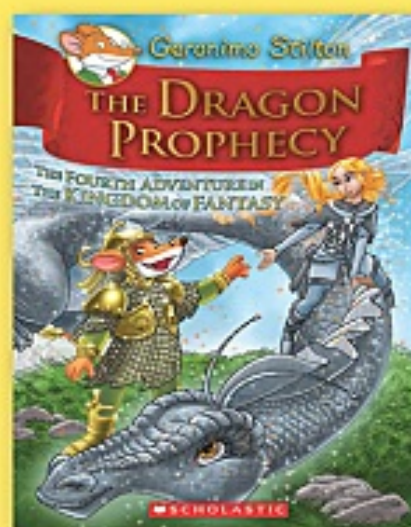
THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



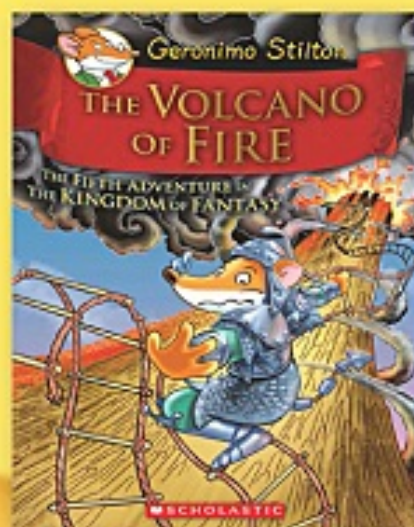
THE QUEST FOR
PARADISE:
THE RETURN TO THE
KINGDOM OF FANTASY



THE AMAZING
VOYAGE:
THE THIRD ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



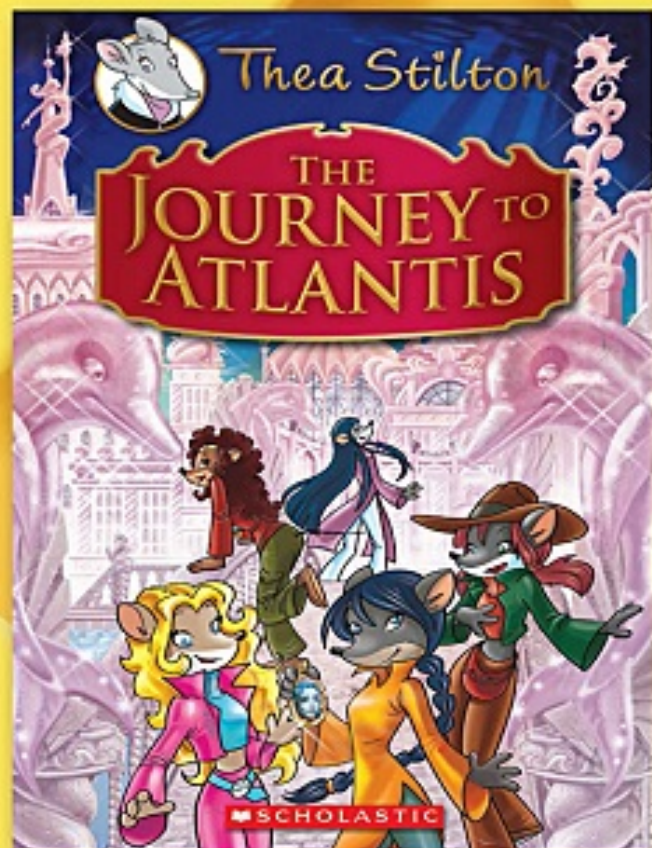
THE DRAGON
PROPHECY:
THE FOURTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



THE VOLCANO
OF FIRE:
THE FIFTH ADVENTURE
IN THE KINGDOM
OF FANTASY



Check out
these very
special editions
featuring me
and the Thea
Sisters!



THE JOURNEY
TO ATLANTIS



THE SECRET OF
THE FAIRIES



Meet **GERONIMO STILTONOOT**

He is a cavemouse — Geronimo Stilton's ancient ancestor! He runs the stone newspaper in the prehistoric village of Old Mouse City. From dealing with dinosaurs to dodging meteorites, his life in the Stone Age is full of adventure!



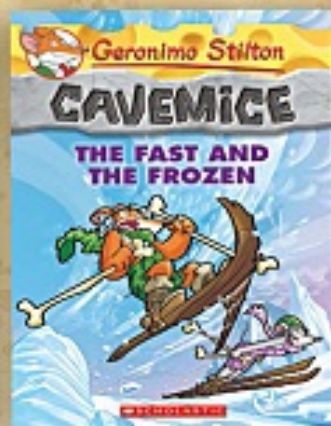
#1 The Stone of Fire



#2 Watch Your Tail!



#3 Help, I'm in Hot Lava!



#4 The Fast and the Frozen



Join me and my friends on
a journey through time in
this very special edition!



THE JOURNEY
THROUGH TIME



1. Mountains of the Mangy Yeti
2. Cacklefur Castle
3. Angry Walnut Tree
4. Rattenbaum Palace
5. Rancidrat River
6. Bridge of Shaky Steps

7. Squeakspeare Mansion
8. Slimy Swamp
9. Ogre Highway
10. Gloomeria
11. Shivery Arts Academy
12. Horrorwood Studios

MYSTERIOUS VALLEY





2 CACKLEFUR CASTLE

1. Oozing moat
2. Drawbridge
3. Grand entrance
4. Moldy basement
5. Patio, with a view of the moat
6. Dusty library
7. Room for unwanted guests
8. Mummy room
9. Watchtower
10. Creaking staircase
11. Banquet room
12. Garage (for antique hearses)
13. Bewitched tower
14. Garden of carnivorous plants
15. Stinky kitchen
16. Crocodile pool and piranha tank
17. Creepella's room
18. Tower of musky tarantulas
19. Bitewing's tower (with antique contraptions)

DEAR MOUSE FRIENDS,
GOOD-BYE UNTIL
THE NEXT BOOK!





Meet **CREPELLA VON CACKLEFUR**

Creepella is an enchanting and mysterious mouse with a pet bat named Bitewing. By night Creepella is a special-effects designer and director of scary films, and by day she's studying to become a journalist!

MEET ME IN HORRORWOOD

Something is wrong with Gorgo, the monster in the moat of Cacklefur Castle! Creepella discovers that he is lovesick for the monster Blobbina, who also happens to be a famous movie star. But when Creepella delivers Blobbina a love letter from Gorgo, she finds out Blobbina has disappeared! Creepella and Billy Squeakspeare head to Horrorwood to search for the missing Blobbina. Will they ever find her?



 **SCHOLASTIC**